

*Contemporary Marxian Political  
Movements in the United States*

1917-1939

AN ABRIDGMENT

BY

WILLIAM ISAACS

UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA LIBRARY

*Contemporary Marxian Political Movements  
in the United States*

1917-1939

WILLIAM ISAACS



AN ABRIDGMENT OF A DISSERTATION IN THE DEPARTMENT OF  
GOVERNMENT SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF THE GRADUATE  
SCHOOL OF ARTS AND SCIENCE IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF  
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF  
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

DEGREE CONFERRED IN FEBRUARY 1940

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY  
WASHINGTON SQUARE  
NEW YORK

1942

## FOREWORD

Herein are presented several chapters on the principles, strategy, and tactics of the Communist party, taken from a more detailed study made by this writer. The complete work deals with the history, political philosophy, and practices of the Socialist Labor party, the Socialist party, the Social Democratic Federation, the Communist party, the Lovestone and Trotsky movements, and numerous splinter groups. A detailed bibliography of the official publications of each movement is appended.

It should be especially noted that the author has no thesis in the accepted sense of the term. He has not argued for or against Marxism or any of its political movements. He has attempted an objective study of their beliefs, conduct, and contentions, based upon their official literature.



COPYRIGHT 1942 BY NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

# CONTEMPORARY MARXIAN POLITICAL MOVEMENTS IN THE UNITED STATES

## CHAPTER XVI

### THE COMMUNIST PARTY — ANALYSIS OF DEMOCRACY, FASCISM, AND WAR (1928-1935)

#### PRINCIPLES OF MARXISM-LENINISM-STALINISM<sup>1</sup>

During the period ushered in by the Sixth World Congress, the Communist International and its many sections (including, of course, the Communist party, United States of America) reiterated and reaffirmed their basic position on their ultimate objective,<sup>2</sup> the nature of the state, democracy, fascism, and war.

The ultimate aim of the Communist International is to replace world capitalist economy by a world system of communism. . . .<sup>3</sup>

Basing itself on the experience of the revolutionary labor movement on all continents and of all peoples, the Communist International, in its theoretical and practical work, stands wholly and reservedly upon the ground of *revolutionary Marxism* and its further development, Leninism, which is nothing else but Marxism of the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution.<sup>4</sup>

#### THE STATE

The traditional Marxist-Leninist view of the state as an instrument of oppression, exploitation, and coercion, and an executive committee of the ruling capitalist class, was boldly proclaimed. Addressing the workers of the United States, M. Olgin attempted to make the Communist position clear:

. . . You have been fed so much "democracy" bunk that you think it is almost sacrilege to reveal the true nature of the State. This is exactly what your masters are after with their propaganda. They want you to believe that the State is holy and that its high functionaries are like saints surrounded by halos. All the pulpits, schools, newspapers, radio, lectures, moving pictures are engaged in giving you false notions about the State. . . .

The State is an instrument of power in the hands of the big industrialists, bankers and landlords, who by this token are the ruling class. The State is there to effect the exploitation and oppression of the workers and the poor and small farmers and also of the subjugated colonial peoples, by the ruling class. The Constitution, the government, its laws,

<sup>1</sup> Stalin, *Foundations of Leninism*, passim.

<sup>2</sup> Stalin, *Leninism*, Vol. I, pp. 387-388.

<sup>3</sup> E.C.C.I., *Program of the Communist International*, p. 30.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.



its agencies: the army, the militia, the police, the courts, the jails, the legislatures—all are there to effect the exploitation and oppression of you and millions like you.<sup>5</sup>

In modern society, Communist taught, the state may take many nominal forms: democracy, limited monarchy, fascism, etc. Despite these apparent differences in form, in its essence the basic nature of the state and the role it plays remain unchanged: the instrument used by capitalists to maintain their hegemony and the status quo.

The Communists are the only group in present-day society who recognize the basic nature of the capitalist State. The State may change its appearance and its appendices. It may use the parliamentary system, with a limited freedom of speech to opponents—as long as this opposition is not too dangerous. It tightens the screws and tries to silence the opposition when the situation becomes disturbing for big capital—as this was done under Wilson during the war. It may do away with parliamentary procedure altogether and institute an open reign of terror when danger to capitalism becomes particularly acute due to the rising tide of the revolutionary labor movement—as was done in fascist Germany. The forms change. The phraseology differs according to time and place. The essence remains. The essence of the capitalist State is service in the employ of capitalism for the preservation of capitalism.<sup>6</sup>

Communists did not believe it possible to capture the state machinery at the polls and thus transform capitalism to socialism peacefully. The present rulers of society would resist to the death and use their extralegal and economic control of the state to organize a counterrevolution to crush those who legally gained control. The only solution, therefore, they argued, consisted in the forcible overthrow of the existing state, the confiscation of all raw materials, public utilities, and instruments of production, and the establishment of a Soviet America, with power lodged in an all-Soviet Congress elected by workers, farmers, and soldiers.<sup>7</sup>

We Communists say that there is one way to abolish the capitalist State, and that is to smash it by force. To make Communism possible the workers must take hold of the State machinery of capitalism and destroy it.<sup>8</sup>

The Communist Party is the only Party which organizes the workers and farmers to create a revolutionary government which will confiscate the industries, banks, railroads, etc. from the parasite capitalists who have proved they do not know how to run them, and to put the industrial machinery to work for the benefit of the masses of workers and farmers.<sup>9</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Olgin, *Why Communism?* (second revised edition), p. 23.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 58-64.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>9</sup> Browder, *Communism in the United States*, pp. 94-95. Also see Foster, *Toward Soviet America*, p. 279.

# DEMOCRACY: MEANING AND NATURE<sup>10</sup>

During the period following the Sixth World Congress, Communists everywhere pointed out the deceptions, shortcomings, and inadequacies of "democracy." As long as the economic system of capitalism prevails, they contended, those who control the economic order also control its politics; directly, by their ability to finance candidates and political campaigns, and destroy any opposition to their policies through resort to bribes and underhand politics; indirectly, by the propaganda disseminated through agencies of their domination: newspapers, schools, magazines, radio, church. In the eyes of the Communist party, democracy was nothing but a masked bourgeois dictatorship.

In consequence, Communists alleged, workers going to the polls are confronted, in the candidates and policies of the major parties, with tweedledum and tweedledee; neither candidates nor policies represent their choice or interests.

In the matter of that much vaunted freedom of speech and press, Communists likewise held that these Constitutional rights are always observed in the breach in crucial or critical times. During war, opposition by word of mouth or newspaper is punished by long prison terms for espionage. Likewise, during an economic crisis strikers who attempt to address their fellow workers or distribute handbills are clubbed and jailed. In short, freedom of speech and press are only accorded to those in agreement with the underlying premises of the existing politico-economic system when that system functions smoothly. Workers who base their hopes for peaceful progress on freedom of speech and press are clinging to illusions, the Communist party argument ran:

Lenin said: "In a capitalist society, under the most favorable conditions of development, we have a more or less complete democracy in the democratic republic. But this democracy is always limited by the narrow-framework of capitalist exploitation and therefore always remains in reality a democracy for a minority, only for the possessing classes, only for the rich. The freedom of a capitalist system always remains much the same as that of the Greek republics of antiquity: a freedom for slave-owners. The hired modern slaves, thanks to the conditions of capitalist exploitation, remain so crushed by need and misery that they have no interest in 'democracy' and 'politics,' and in the ordinary, peaceful, course of events. The majority of the population does not participate at all in social and political life." (Lenin, *Complete Works*, Vol. XXI.)

"Democracy for an insignificant minority, democracy for the rich—that is the democracy of capitalist society. Even in the freest and most democratic republics, even in their

<sup>10</sup> Dutt, *Fascism and Social Revolution*, pp. 82, 255, 274. E.C.C.I., *Program of the Communist International*, pp. 37-39. L. Magyr, "What Is Fascism?" *The Communist* (April 1934), XIII: 4, pp. 378-380.



most developed form, even where the labor movement enjoys the broadest 'legality,' bourgeois democracy only disguises by its democracy the fact that the bourgeois-democratic State is nothing but a *personification and incorporation of class domination, of the class dictatorship of the bourgeoisie*. Marx, Engels, Lenin, Stalin have shown that *bourgeois democracy means the dictatorship of the bourgeoisie, that the bourgeois State, however democratic it may be, is nothing but the incorporation of bourgeois dictatorship*.

"Democracy under the capitalist regime is only a capitalist democracy, a democracy of the exploiting minority, consisting in limiting the rights of the exploited majority—a democracy directed against that majority." (Stalin)

"That is the meaning of bourgeois democracy."<sup>11</sup>

Genuine political democracy, it was pointed out, is incompatible with economic (capitalist) autocracy. Only under an economic system where all instruments of production are commonly owned and democratically managed can there be a true political democracy. As the outstanding example of this, the Communist party pointed to the Soviet Union where economic democracy and political democracy were declared to go hand in hand.<sup>12</sup>

#### FASCISM: MEANING AND NATURE<sup>13</sup>

The Communist analysis of fascism may be briefly stated thus: Fascism is a dictatorial stage in the decline of capitalism, resulting from the conscious effort of the industrial and finance capitalists to retain their control of industry and production which have been threatened by the growing discontent of an impoverished proletariat, brought on by the necessarily faulty functioning of the capitalist system.

What is fascism? It is "the open, terrorist dictatorship of the most reactionary, most chauvinist and most imperialist elements of finance capital."

What is its purpose? It is to enforce the policy of finance capital, which is to bolster up its profits at the cost of degrading the living standards of the toiling population, to violently smash the resistance of the working class, to behead the working class by the physical extermination of its leading cadres, the Communists.

Where does it find its mass basis? Among the petty-bourgeoisie, by demagogic promises to the desperate, impoverished farmers, shopkeepers, artisans, office workers and civil servants, and particularly the declassed and criminal elements in the big cities. It also tries to penetrate the more backward strata of the workers.<sup>14</sup>

... Fascism is the desperate effort of finance capital, which has inveighed many smaller capitalists, large sections of the deluded middle class and many backward workers to help it beat back the advancing proletarian revolution and to maintain in existence the obsolete capitalist system, that history has irrevocably sentenced to destruction and to replacement by Socialism.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>11</sup> Magyr, *op. cit.*, p. 378.

<sup>12</sup> Browder, *op. cit.*, p. 101. E.C.C.I., *op. cit.*, pp. 37-39. Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

<sup>13</sup> E.C.C.I., *op. cit.*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>14</sup> Browder, *op. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>15</sup> Foster, *From Bryan to Stalin*, pp. 322-323.

Fascism, in short, is a movement of mixed elements dominantly petit-bourgeois, but also slum-proletarian and demoralized working class, financed and directed by finance-capital, by the big industrials, landlords and financiers, to defeat the working-class revolution and smash the working-class organisations.<sup>16</sup>

R. Palme Dutt, British Communist theoretician, has listed the following as the outstanding characteristics of fascism:

1. The basic aim of the maintenance of capitalism in the face of the revolution which the advance of productive technique and of class antagonisms threatens.
2. The consequent intensification of the capitalist dictatorship.
3. The limitation and repression of the independent working-class movement, and building up of a system of organized class-co-operation.
4. The revolt against, and increasing supersession of, parliamentary democracy.
5. The extending State monopolist organization of industry and finance.
6. The closer concentration of each imperialist bloc into a single economic-political unit.
7. The advance to war as the necessary accompaniment of the increasing imperialist antagonisms.

All these characteristics are typical, in greater or lesser degree, of all modern capitalist states, no less than of the specifically Fascist states.<sup>17</sup>

*Democracy versus fascism?* During the period from the Sixth to the Seventh World Congress, Communist theoreticians were at great pains to make clear that in essential features bourgeois democracy and fascism are identical.<sup>18</sup> They made their sharpest attacks upon those Social-Democratic leaders who deigned to declare that fascism is not the same as democracy, that democracy does not pave the way for fascism, and that the defense of democracy is the best bulwark against fascism.<sup>19</sup>

Fascism is not an alternative to capitalism; it is capitalism, the most extreme expression of the capitalistic dictatorship. . . . The difference between Fascism and a bourgeois democratic regime is that the former is more extreme and brutal in its exploitation of the toilers. . . .<sup>20</sup>

First, it must be understood that fascism grows naturally out of bourgeois democracy under the conditions of capitalist decline. It is only another form of the same class rule, the dictatorship of finance capital. . . .<sup>21</sup>

From this it is quite obvious that the difference between the rule of capitalist democracy and the rule of fascism is a difference in form and method, not in principle. The principle remains the same: serving the interests of the owners of wealth. The foundation of society remains the same: private ownership and exploitation. The fascist regime is

<sup>16</sup> Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 102.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93. Also see Browder, *op. cit.*, pp. 114-115.

<sup>18</sup> Dutt, *op. cit.*, pp. 78-79, 235-236, 255-256, 275, 296, 299. Foster, *Toward Soviet America*, p. 205. Manuilsky, *Revolutionary Crisis, Fascism and War*, p. 26. Olgin, *op. cit.*, pp. 44-48.

<sup>19</sup> Browder, *Meaning of Social-Fascism*, p. 16; *Communism in the United States*, p. 28.

<sup>20</sup> Foster, *op. cit.*, p. 205.

<sup>21</sup> Browder, *Communism in the United States*, p. 114.



the open dictatorship of the capitalist class, the terrorist dictatorship, with the veil of democracy cast away. We Communists value the democratic rights which the workers have won—as a consequence of incessant struggle—under capitalist democracy. We are ready to defend these rights. We strive to bring about united working-class action to defend these rights. But we realize that capitalist democracy is the disguised dictatorship of the capitalist class, that there is no fundamental difference, no difference in substance between capitalist democracy and fascism.<sup>22</sup>

Does this mean that, so long as the forms of bourgeois democracy remain, bourgeois democracy provides the best defence of the workers against Fascism? On the contrary. The workers fight, and need to fight, tenaciously for every democratic right of organization and of agitation within the existing regime; but they cannot afford for one moment to be blind to the fact that bourgeois democracy is only a cover for the capitalist dictatorship, and that within its forms the advance to Fascism is steadily pushed forward.

Bourgeois democracy breeds Fascism. Fascism grows organically out of bourgeois democracy. . . . To preach confidence in legalism, in constitutionalism, in bourgeois democracy, that is, in the capitalist state, means to invite and to guarantee the victory of fascism. . . .<sup>23</sup>

To many, the alternative of Fascism or Communism is no welcome alternative, and they would prefer to deny it and to regard both as rival and in their view even parallel, forms of extremism. They dream of a third alternative which shall be neither, and shall realise a peaceful harmonious progress without class struggle, through the forms of capitalist "democracy," "planned capitalism," etc.

This dream of a third alternative is in fact illusory. . . .<sup>24</sup>

Excoriating attacks were made upon Social-Democrats for their alleged failure to recognize the essential similarity of democracy and fascism.

What are the ideas, the misconceptions, with which the social-fascists confuse and disarm the workers?

First, is the idea that fascism is the opposite of capitalist democracy, and this democracy is therefore the means of combating and defeating fascism. This false idea serves a double purpose. By means of counterposing "democracy against dictatorship," it tries to hide the fact that the capitalist "democracy" is only a form of the capitalist dictatorship: it tries to identify in the worker's mind the fascist dictatorship with the proletarian dictatorship in the Soviet Union, and thus cause the worker to reject the road of revolution. At the same time, this slogan is used to hide the fact that capitalist democracy is not the enemy, but the mother of fascism; that it is not the destroyer but the creator of fascism. It uses the truth that fascism destroys democracy to propagate the falsehood that democracy will also destroy fascism. . . .<sup>25</sup>

Therewith the whole card-castle of bourgeois democracy, of the "democratic" defense against Fascism, of "democracy versus dictatorship," of the whole Social Democratic line, came tumbling down. The line of the "Left-Cartel," of the French Socialist Party,

<sup>22</sup> Olgin, *op. cit.*, p. 46.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 299.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>25</sup> Browder, *Communism in the United States*, p. 28; also see *The Meaning of Social-Fascism*, p. 16.

of the parliamentary-democratic "defense" against Fascism, was proved once again only to have smoothed the way for the advance of Fascism, . . .<sup>26</sup>

*Fighting fascism.* Having thoroughly repudiated the proposition that fascism can be fought by strengthening democracy, Communist party theoreticians affirmed that fascism is an inevitable outgrowth of declining capitalism which can be stopped only by the united front of an aroused, militant, class-conscious, mass proletariat prepared to overthrow the democratic-capitalist system before it declines to its fascist stage.<sup>27</sup>

. . . The fight against Fascism can only be conducted on the basis of the united class fight of the workers (leading all the exploited strata) against all the attacks of finance-capital, whether these attacks are conducted through nominal "democratic" forms or through open Fascist forms. . . .<sup>28</sup>

. . . The path of bourgeois democracy ends in Fascism. The battle for the workers' dictatorship must be fought, not merely after Fascism, but *before Fascism*, as the sole means to prevent Fascism. Social Democracy says: First Fascism, then Revolution. But Communism says: *Revolution before Fascism, and preventing Fascism. Fascism is not inevitable!* Fascism only becomes inevitable if the working class follows the line of reformism, of trust in the capitalist state, of refusal of the united front, and thus lets itself be struck down by the class enemy. But if the working class follows the line of the united front, of the rising mass struggle, of the building of its Communist Party and fighting mass organisation to the final victory of the revolution and establishment of the workers' dictatorship, then the working class can defeat and crush Fascism and pass straight to the socialist order with no costly and shameful Fascist interlude. This is the path to defeat Fascism.<sup>29</sup>

#### WAR

The war position formulated by the Sixth Congress was basically that enunciated time and again by Lenin and the Comintern: capitalism breeds imperialism which in turn breeds war; nothing short of the overthrow of capitalism and the establishment of a socialist economy will eliminate the causes which make war a perennial occurrence.

War is inseparable from capitalism. From this it follows that the "abolition" of war is possible only through the abolition of capitalism, i.e. through the overthrow of the bourgeois class of exploiters, through the proletarian dictatorship, the building of Socialism and the elimination of classes. All other theories and proposals, however "realistic" they may claim to be, are nothing but a deception calculated to perpetuate exploitation and war.<sup>30</sup>

Capitalism breeds war. Capitalism cannot solve its contradictions without war. But

<sup>26</sup> Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 275.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 306.

<sup>30</sup> E.C.C.I., *The Struggle Against Imperialist War and the Tasks of the Communists—Resolution of the Sixth World Congress*, p. 9.



this solution is the solution of ruin, War is devastation. It destroys not only precious human lives, but large amounts of goods. It is an orgy of destruction. The brunt of a capitalist war, however, is borne by those who work.<sup>31</sup>

*Revolutionary defeatism.* Although Communists declared they were obliged to oppose war in order to save workers from needlessly shedding their blood in defense of imperialism, they nevertheless realized that they could not always prevent an outbreak. In the event of war, it would be their duty to expose the hypocritical, imperialist aims of the warmongers, refuse to support the war, spread revolutionary defeatism at home, and look for every opportunity to turn the imperialist war into a civil war and establish a dictatorship of the proletariat as the first step in the creation of a socialist society.<sup>32</sup>

The political program of the Communists in an imperialist war is the program worked out and applied by the Bolshevik party under the leadership of Lenin in its heroic struggle against the last imperialist war. The main points of this program may be summarized as follows:

(a) The rejection of imperialist "national defense" in this war. To enlighten the workers and peasants as to its reactionary character. Strongly to combat all tendencies in the labor movement which openly, or covertly, justify this war.

(b) Defeatism, i.e. to work for the defeat of the home imperialist government in this war.

(c) Genuine internationalism, i.e. not "international" phrases and formal "agreements," but revolutionary defeatist work to be carried on by the proletariat in all the belligerent countries, for the overthrow of their home bourgeoisie.

(d) To transform the war between imperialist States into proletarian civil war against the bourgeoisie, for the purpose of establishing the dictatorship of the proletariat and Socialism—this transformation to be achieved by means of revolutionary mass action in the rear, and fraternization at the front.

(e) A "democratic" or "just" peace cannot result from an imperialist war without the overthrow of the bourgeoisie and the seizure of power by the proletariat in the most belligerent States. . . .<sup>33</sup>

The only just war which the Communist International urged its adherents to support is one to turn an "imperialist war" into a civil war, or one fought by oppressed colonial peoples for their independence and liberation from the "imperialist yoke."<sup>34</sup>

<sup>31</sup> Olgin, *op. cit.*, p. 13; also see pp. 39-43.

<sup>32</sup> E.C.C.I., *Program of the Communist International*, p. 84; *Fifteen Years of the Communist International*, pp. 40-41; *The Struggle Against the Imperialist War and the Tasks of the Communists*, pp. 19-23.

<sup>33</sup> E.C.C.I., *The Struggle Against Imperialist War and the Tasks of the Communists*, pp. 19-20.

<sup>34</sup> Olgin, *op. cit.*, pp. 42-43. Browder, *Communism in the United States*, p. 98. Piatnitsky, *The Communist Parties in the Fight for the Masses*, pp. 7-12. E.C.C.I., *Program of the Communist International*, pp. 57-58, 78; *Fifteen Years of the Communist International*, p. 40; *The Revolutionary Movement in the Colonies*, *passim*.

*League of Nations.* The Comintern regarded the League of Nations, in Leninist terms, as a "den of thieves." It rejected the notion that the League could be an instrument for world peace, contending that it was a creation of victorious imperialist powers who pledged mutual aid to maintain the territorial status quo of Europe. It further held that the League was a deadly enemy of the Soviet Union, and was conspiring to bring about its downfall.

The League of Nations, founded nine years ago as an imperialist alliance in defense of the robber "peace" of Versailles, and for the suppression of the revolutionary movement of the world, is itself more and more becoming a direct instrument for the preparation and carrying through of war against the Soviet Union. The alliances and pacts created under the protectorate of the League of Nations are direct means for camouflaging war preparations, and are themselves instruments for the preparation of war, especially war against the Soviet Union.<sup>35</sup>

The capitalist world, powerless to eliminate its inherent contradictions, strives to establish international associations (the League of Nations) the main purpose of which is to retard the irresistible growth of the revolutionary crisis and to strangle the union of proletarian republics by war or blockade. . . .<sup>36</sup>

Finally, the Soviet Union does not want to belong to the League of Nations because it does not want to be part of the screen of imperialist machinations which the League of Nations represents and which are concealed by the honeyed phrases of its members. The League of Nations is a "rendezvous" for imperialist chiefs, who do their business behind the scenes. What the League of Nations says officially is empty twaddle, intended to deceive the workers. But what the imperialist chiefs do unofficially behind the scenes is real imperialist business, which is pharisaically concealed by the eloquent orators of the League of Nations. What can there be surprising in the fact that the Soviet Union does not want to become a member and participant of this anti-nation comedy?<sup>37</sup>

The Communist International was especially bitter against the Social-Democratic movement because of the latter's reputed faith in and reliance upon the League of Nations as an instrument for peace and democracy. For this reason, among others, the Social Democrats were assailed as agents of imperialism and betrayers of the working class.<sup>38</sup>

*Defend the Soviet Union.* Consistent with its fundamental principles of revolutionary mass action and the class struggle, the Communist parties throughout the world were urged to make every effort to keep their capitalist governments on peaceful terms with the Soviet Union by fostering trade agreements on terms advantageous to the U.S.S.R., by opposing co-operation with unfriendly capitalist countries, by urging diplomatic recognition of the U.S.S.R. where such recognition did not exist, etc. Most

<sup>35</sup> E.C.C.I., *The Struggle Against Imperialist War and the Tasks of the Communists*, p. 6.

<sup>36</sup> E.C.C.I., *Program of the Communist International*, p. 27.

<sup>37</sup> Stalin, *Leninism*, Vol. I, pp. 401-402.

<sup>38</sup> Olgin, *op. cit.*, p. 31.



important of all, in the event of war against the Soviet Union by their own governments, the Communist parties were bound to refuse to support the war, and were required to organize mass resistance to it, and make every effort to turn the war against the Soviet Union into a civil war to overthrow their capitalist governments, establish proletarian dictatorships, form alliances, and coöperate with the Soviet Union for building socialism.<sup>39</sup>

In view of the fact that the U.S.S.R. is the only fatherland of the international proletariat, the principal bulwark of its achievements and the most important factor for its international emancipation, the international proletariat must on its part facilitate the success of the work of socialist construction in the U.S.S.R. and defend it against the attacks of the capitalist powers by all the means in its power.<sup>40</sup>

In the event of the imperialist states declaring war up and attacking the U.S.S.R., the international proletariat must retaliate by organizing bold and determined mass action and struggling for the overthrow of the imperialist governments with the slogan of: Dictatorship of the Proletariat and Alliance with the U.S.S.R.<sup>41</sup>

. . . The proletariat in the imperialist countries must not only fight for the defeat of their own governments in this war, but must actively strive to secure victory for the Soviet Union. . . . Therefore, the tactics and the choice of means of fighting will not only be dictated by the interests of the class struggle at home in each country, but also by considerations for the outcome of the war at the front, which is a bourgeois class war against the proletarian State.<sup>42</sup>

. . . The international policy of the U.S.S.R. is a peace policy, which conforms to the interests of the ruling class in Soviet Russia, viz., the proletariat, and to the interests of the international proletariat. This policy rallies all the allies of the proletarian dictatorship around its banner and provides the best basis for taking advantage of the antagonisms among the imperialist States. . . . It strives to put off the conflict with imperialism as long as possible. . . .

. . . The proletariat in the Soviet Union harbors no illusions as to the possibility of a durable peace with the imperialists. The proletariat knows that the imperialist attack against the Soviet Union is inevitable; that in the process of a proletarian world revolution, wars between proletarian and bourgeois States, wars for the emancipation of the world from capitalism, will necessarily and inevitably arise. . . .<sup>43</sup>

*Opposition to pacts.* The Communist International clearly recognized the need for the Soviet Union to enter into trade agreements and make nonaggression treaties with imperialist powers to prolong peace and delay the inevitable outbreak of hostilities arising from the conflicting aims and interests of the democratic-capitalist and fascist powers.<sup>44</sup> But it neverthe-

<sup>39</sup> E.C.C.I., *The Struggle Against Imperialist War and the Tasks of the Communists*, pp. 27-31; *Program of the Communist International*, pp. 66-67.

<sup>40</sup> E.C.C.I., *Program of the Communist International*, p. 66.

<sup>41</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>42</sup> E.C.C.I., *The Struggle Against Imperialist War and the Tasks of the Communists*, p. 29.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

<sup>44</sup> Stalin, *Leninism*, Vol. I, p. 380; Vol. II, p. 325.

less refused to place any reliance upon pacts, treaties, and conferences as means of preventing war.

. . . Herein lie the objective significance and fundamental aim of the disarmament proposals and conferences initiated by the imperialist States, and particularly of the "work" of the League of Nations in this sphere: the discussions on "security"; the proposal to establish arbitration courts; the pacts for the "outlawry of war," etc. The purpose of all these pacifist schemes, treaties, and conferences are: (a) to camouflage imperialist armaments; (b) to enable certain great powers to maneuver against each other for the purpose of securing, by treaties, a reduction in their rivals' armaments, while at the same time to increase their own military power; (c) to enable the great powers to reach temporary agreements guaranteeing their domination over the weak and oppressed countries; (d) to carry out ideological and political mobilization against the Soviet Union under the cloak of pacifist slogans, or direct preparation for war.<sup>45</sup>

The Comintern was especially severe in warning its sections not to be taken in by ". . . the sophistries and catch-words by which the bourgeoisie and Social Democracy try to justify war."<sup>46</sup> It admonished all Communists not to be won over to support of an imperialist war even by such a slogan as "Fight against reactionary Fascism."<sup>47</sup>

. . . In the last imperialist war, the Allies made use of the slogan "Fight against Prussian militarism," while the Central Powers used the slogan "Fight against Tsarism"; both sides using the respective slogans to mobilize the masses for the war. In a future war between Italy and France, or Yugo-Slavia, the same purpose will be served by the slogan "Fight against reactionary Fascism," for the bourgeoisie in the latter countries will take advantage of the anti-Fascist sentiments of the masses of the people to justify imperialist war. . . .<sup>48</sup>

*Opposition to war preparations.* The struggle against war and militarism involves a fight against military appropriations and expenditures, the Comintern urged. All Communists were instructed to expose the war preparations of their respective governments by exposing and opposing the huge war budgets and appropriations for military purposes.

. . . The slogan: "Not a man, not a penny for the army," i.e., relentless struggle against bourgeois militarism, against its armies of whatever form, voting against war budgets, etc., holds good.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>45</sup> E.C.C.I., *The Struggle Against Imperialist War and the Tasks of the Communists*, p. 51.

<sup>46</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14-15.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 38.



## CHAPTER XVII

THE COMMUNIST PARTY — STRATEGY AND TACTICS  
(1928-1935)

Although important theoretical differences exist between strategy and tactics, they are closely interrelated, and in many borderline cases it is difficult to determine where one ends and the other begins. Consequently, the two are not always sharply distinguished. In the main, strategy is concerned with the broad fundamental policies to be pursued to win the masses over to membership in or support of the aims and policies of the Communist party. Tactics, on the other hand, deal with the specific methods of achieving these objectives.

In the discussion which follows, no serious attempt will be made to draw a sharp line between the two.<sup>1</sup> In a general way, the key to the strategy of the Sixth Congress of the Comintern is to be found in a consideration of the following: social-fascism; dual unionism; united-front-from-below; labor party; the Negro question. Under the heading of tactics these questions will be considered: the fight for immediate demands; the creation of sympathetic mass organizations; allied problems.

SOCIAL FASCISM<sup>2</sup>

The theory of social-fascism, if not the name, was an inevitable outgrowth of the policies of the Sixth World Congress. Starting from the assumption that the workers of the world were everywhere in revolt and that they were being shunted away from militant mass action by reactionary, Social-Democratic leaders in trade unions and in the political arena, the Comintern concluded that Social Democracy constituted the main danger to the growth of the revolutionary movement. It therefore held that one of the foremost duties of Communists was to expose the policies of the Social Democrats; objectively considered, despite their lip service to socialism, the latter, by their opposition to the correct policies of the Communist International, were misleading the working class and aiding the cause of fascism. From this approach, the term social-fascism was coined, applicable to all who, while socialists in name, were by the Communist analysis fascist in deed. Further, their real undisclosed role, the Communists maintained,

<sup>1</sup> The Comintern's statement regarding the line of tactics overlaps with Browder's statement of strategy. Cf. E.C.C.I., *Program of the Communist International*, pp. 80-84. Browder, *Communism in the United States*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>2</sup> Browder, *The Meaning of Social-Fascism*, *passim*.

was to retard the advances of workers toward a proletarian dictatorship and keep them saddled to the reactionary capitalist system.

A *social-fascist* is one who, while professing to be a Socialist, actually helps capitalist reaction . . . . The social-fascists defend capitalist democracy which is a blind for the cruel oppression of the masses, and they oppose the dictatorship of the proletariat which is real democracy for and by the masses.<sup>3</sup>

The Social Fascists make a great parade of their theory of the "gradual" evolution of capitalism into Socialism through a process of peaceful parliamentarism . . . . We have seen . . . just what this "gradualness" theory of the Social Fascist means in practice—simply the creation of a united front with the capitalists to throw the burden of the crisis upon the workers, to try desperately to save the capitalist system and to crush back the revolution . . . .<sup>4</sup>

. . . The policy of the Social Democracy is basically that of Fascism; the beating back of the proletarian revolution, the saving of capitalism and the profits of the employers at the expense of the workers. The principal difference is that Social Democracy hides its Fascism under a mask of Marxian Socialism. Thus, in the period of the decline of capitalism, Social Reformism becomes Social Fascism.<sup>5</sup>

The "fight" between Social Fascism and Fascism is so much "sound and fury signifying nothing." The two movements are blood-brothers. Manuilsky says: "Fascism and Social Fascism are two aspects of one and the same bulwark of bourgeois dictatorship," and Stalin says: "Fascism is a militant organization of the bourgeoisie resting upon the active support of Social Democracy." Their quarrel is only a case of friction between two methods of repressing the workers, between two sets of capitalist agents fighting for the flesh-pots of office and control. The Social Fascists would maintain the semblance of capitalist democracy as the best means of forestalling the revolution and they would be its administrators; whereas the Fascists would sweep aside this fake democracy and its champions and proceed to more direct methods of repression. . . . In due season the Social Fascist leaders, in the name of Socialism, will join with the Hitlerites in shooting down the revolutionary workers. . . .<sup>6</sup>

Although directed primarily against the Social Democrats, the term "social-fascism" was also used to include those alleged followers of Marx and Lenin who while professing to be Communists were not in agreement with the Communist party "line": the Lovestoneites (Jay Lovestone, Bertram Wolfe), the Trotskyists—the so-called "left" social fascists, and numerous Communist-intellectuals without avowed party affiliations (Max Eastman, V. F. Calverton, Sidney Hook, etc.). The terms was also applied to professed non-Marxists who were also deemed enemies and willful misleaders of the working class.

The Social Fascists ". . . range from apologies for capitalism through open revision of Marxism to 'orthodox' Marxism of the Kautskyist revisionist school. . . ."<sup>7</sup>

<sup>3</sup> Communist Party, U.S.A., *This Way Out—A Program for American Labor*, p. 16.

<sup>4</sup> Foster, *Toward Soviet America*, pp. 214-215.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 177.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 191-192.

<sup>7</sup> Browder, *The Meaning of Social-Fascism*, p. 31.



But the most insidious and dangerous to the workers of all this crop of demagogues are the so-called "left" Social Fascists. The substance of their activity is, while giving practical support to the right Social Fascists, to criticize them in the name of the revolution. They are the radical phrase-mongers par excellence. Their objective task is the confusion of the most advanced elements of the workers and therefore the breaking up of serious movements against the capitalists and their revolutionary labor henchmen. . . . Trotsky belongs to this general category . . .<sup>8</sup>

. . . Too many of our members still do not understand that Trotskyism and the Trotskyists are not a "branch" of the Communist movement but rather a police agency of the capitalist class.<sup>9</sup>

In the United States, the Socialist party was called the leading party of social-fascism; it was accused of fostering the development of fascism in many diverse ways, chiefly by putting the breaks on the militant, mass revolutionary action of class-conscious workers.<sup>10</sup> Norman Thomas was called ". . . the leading exponent of social fascism in America. . . ."<sup>11</sup> Other Americans calling themselves labor leaders but included among those dubbed social-fascists were the following: Hillquit,<sup>12</sup> Lovestone,<sup>13</sup> Muste,<sup>14</sup> Weisbord,<sup>14</sup> Cannon,<sup>14</sup> Maurer,<sup>14</sup> Hillman,<sup>15</sup> and Dubinsky.<sup>16</sup> On the international scene, those who were assailed as socialists in words but not in deed included such figures as Ramsay MacDonald<sup>17</sup> and Karl Kautsky.<sup>17</sup>

The most serious charge preferred against Social Democracy was that its alleged social-fascistic tactics had made possible the victory of Hitler and the advent of German fascism.

. . . The establishment of the fascist dictatorship was only possible for the bourgeoisie in consequence of the sabotage of the class struggle pursued by Social-Democracy, its disorganization and disarming of the proletariat and its ever more pronounced fusion with the capitalist state apparatus. Only owing to the fact that the Communist Party of Germany, as the revolutionary vanguard, was robbed of the support of the majority of the working class by the Social-Democratic policy of splitting, could finance capital erect its terroristic dictatorship over the proletariat.<sup>18</sup>

Because of these allegations, one of the great strategic tasks the Sixth World Congress thus set for itself was the destruction of Social Democracy

<sup>8</sup> Foster, *op. cit.*, p. 195.

<sup>9</sup> Browder, *Communism in the United States*, p. 63.

<sup>10</sup> Communist Party, U.S.A., *op. cit.*, p. 42.

<sup>11</sup> Browder, *The Meaning of Social-Fascism*, p. 34.

<sup>12</sup> Browder, *Communism in the United States*, p. 130.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 63.

<sup>14</sup> Foster, *Toward Soviet America*, pp. 196-197.

<sup>15</sup> Communist Party, U.S.A., *op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>16</sup> Foster, *op. cit.*, p. 192.

<sup>17</sup> Browder, *The Meaning of Social-Fascism*, p. 31.

<sup>18</sup> Pieck, *We Are Fighting for a Soviet Germany*, p. 54.

and its right (A.F. of L. bureaucracy) and left (Trotskyists, Lovestoneites) peripheries. Stern measures were ordered to be taken against social-fascists everywhere—in the trade unions, on the political field—in order to expose them before their rank-and-file following.<sup>19</sup>

Social Democracy is going through its greatest crisis. It is in decomposition, it is at its deepest decline but it would be false to assume that it has ceased to exist. It is for us to destroy it. Every vacillation in our position of struggle in relation to Social-Democracy, every ambiguity in our united front policy for winning the Social-Democratic masses, increases the danger of the reconsolidation of Social-Democracy and could bar our successful way to the restoration of the unity of the working class. . . .<sup>20</sup>

#### DUAL UNIONISM

As a further corollary to its "revolutionary upsurge" thesis, the Sixth World Congress inaugurated an extensive movement for the creation of independent unions under the indirect leadership and guidance of the Communist party. This policy of creating rival unions independent of those already existing is known as "dual unionism."

*Earlier attitude.* Prior to 1928, the Communists had followed in trade-union policies the line set by Lenin and the Second World Congress of the Communist International (1920). Its thesis on trade unionism was opposed to the formation of dual unions. It had declared:

. . . Any voluntary withdrawal from the economic movement, every artificial attempt to organize special unions, without being compelled thereto by exceptional acts of violence on the part of the trade union bureaucracy . . . represents a great danger to the Communist movement. . . .<sup>21</sup>

As a result of this decision, which was indorsed by the First Congress of the Red International of Labor Unions in 1921,<sup>22</sup> the general trade-union policy followed by Communists was that of "creating revolutionary cells and groups"<sup>23</sup> within existing unions on the American scene and elsewhere, a policy sometimes referred to as "boring from within."

*T.U.E.L.* Pursuant to this policy the Trade Union Educational League had been formed in the United States in November 1920, under Communist auspices.<sup>24</sup> Its First National Congress, held in August 1922, categorically rejected dual unionism.<sup>24</sup> The T.U.E.L. was regarded as a left-wing progressive bloc which was to function within the existing A.F. of L. move-

<sup>19</sup> Browder, *Communism in the United States*, pp. 125, 130. Foster, *op. cit.*, p. 208. Pieck, *op. cit.*, pp. 7, 54, 62. Piatnitsky, *The Bolshevization of the Communist Parties*, pp. 78-80.

<sup>20</sup> Pieck, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>21</sup> Quoted in Bimba, *History of the American Working Class*, p. 339.

<sup>22</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>23</sup> Foster, *From Bryan to Stalin*, p. 164.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 164-165.



ment.<sup>25</sup> But the criticisms made by the Fourth World Congress of the Red International of Labor Unions (March 1928) of the subserviency of the T.U.E.L. to the corrupt and reactionary bureaucracy of the A.F. of L.<sup>26</sup> foreshadowed the changes in policy which were to follow the Sixth World Congress of the Communist International.

*New position—1928.* When the latter met, it openly condemned the American Federation as a prototype which was being eagerly copied everywhere.

A cynically commercial, and imperialistic secular form of subjecting the proletariat to the ideological influence of the bourgeoisie is represented by contemporary "socialist" reformism. Taking its main gospel from the tablets of imperialist politics, its model today is the deliberately anti-socialist and openly counter-revolutionary *American Federation of Labor*. . . . The principal enemy of revolutionary communism in the labor movement, "socialist" reformism, which has a broad organizational base in the Social-Democratic Parties and through these in the reformist trade unions, stands out in its entire policy and theoretical outlook as a force directed *against the proletarian revolution*.<sup>27</sup>

*T.U.U.L.* Foster has intimated that the reorientation toward independent unions which followed the two Communist Congresses in 1928 (Fourth World Congress of the R.I.L.U. and Sixth World Congress of the C.I.) resulted from changes in objective conditions on the American scene.<sup>28</sup>

In any event, at the fourth national conference of the T.U.E.L. held in August–September 1929, the name was changed to the Trade Union Unity League (T.U.U.L.).<sup>29</sup> Its program laid emphasis upon organizing the unorganized workers into militant unions affiliated to it. But it gave no indication that it would abandon its left-wing fight in A.F. of L. unions unless the latter were "corrupt and impotent."<sup>30</sup>

The declaration of policy of the T.U.U.L. stated:

The Trade Union Unity League aggressively furthers the organization of new revolutionary industrial unions in industries where there are no unions and in industries where the existing unions are corrupt and impotent. The organization of the masses into new unions stands in the very center of the T.U.U.L. program. But this does not imply a policy of petty splits and individual withdrawals of the militant workers from the old trade unions where these have a mass character. . . . On the contrary, the T.U.U.L. organizes the left wing in those old unions and fights for their revolutionization.<sup>31</sup>

<sup>25</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 165.

<sup>26</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 213–215.

<sup>27</sup> E.C.C.I., *Program of the Communist International*, p. 69.

<sup>28</sup> Foster, *op. cit.*, pp. 209–211.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 216–217.

<sup>30</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 218–221.

<sup>31</sup> Quoted in Bimba, *op. cit.*, pp. 344–345.

In sponsoring the formation of independent unions, Communists denied they favor dual unionism as such. They rather argued that new developments had forced such a change at this time.<sup>32</sup>

Tactics and methods of work may vary depending upon the state of the class struggle. In the light of recent events, the Communist Party favors the organization of independent unions *in those cases* where such a measure would constitute *a step in advance* toward the revolutionization of the trade union movement. . . .<sup>33</sup>

. . . The formation of the independent revolutionary unions was made imperative by the systematic sabotage of the struggle by the more and more Fascist A. F. of L. leaders through open strike-breaking, suppression of democracy in the unions, mass expulsions, betrayal of the unorganized, etc. The T.U.U.L. is not a dual organization in the sense of the I.W.W. It does not make war upon the A. F. of L. unions as such, but against their reactionary leaders. . . . The T.U.U.L. is the American section of Labor Unions. It is made up of workers of all political opinions. Its relations towards the Communist party are those of mutual support and cooperation in the struggle, without organizational affiliation.<sup>34</sup>

From 1928 to 1935, great strides were made under the aegis of the T.U.U.L. in organizing unorganized workers and giving direction and militancy to their activities, Communists reported.<sup>35</sup> In 1933, T.U.U.L. unions with 125,000 members succeeded in leading some 200,000 workers in strikes and gaining an additional 100,000 members, and leading "45% of the strikes, an equal number with the A.F. of L."<sup>36</sup>

*Problem of independent unions.* During this period (1928–1935) there also sprang up unions independent of the A.F. of L. and the T.U.U.L. Failing to secure control of them, efforts were made by the T.U.U.L. to unite these independent unions and the T.U.U.L. unions into an Independent Federation of Labor.<sup>37</sup> The plan met with little success, however, and it was reluctantly abandoned.<sup>38</sup>

*Activity in A.F. of L. continued.* Communist trade-union leaders have said that at no time during this period did they relax their efforts to bring militancy within the A.F. of L. They continued their merciless exposure of its social-fascistic leadership; they fought for workers' rights in industry;<sup>39</sup> only pressure from the left upon the A.F. of L. leadership made it possible for the strike movements of the period to assume such large proportions.<sup>40</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Foster, *Toward Soviet America*, p. 258.

<sup>33</sup> Bittelman, *Milestones in the History of the Communist Party*, p. 81.

<sup>34</sup> Foster, *op. cit.*, pp. 257–258.

<sup>35</sup> Foster, *From Bryan to Stalin*, pp. 216–268.

<sup>36</sup> Browder, *Communism in the United States*, pp. 40–41.

<sup>37</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 39–40. C.P., U.S.A., *The Way Out*, pp. 50, 78–80.

<sup>38</sup> Browder, *op. cit.*, p. 197.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 40–41. C.P., U.S.A., *op. cit.*, p. 49.

<sup>40</sup> Browder, *op. cit.*, pp. 40–41.



Early suggestions for unifying the trade-union movement by liquidating the T.U.U.L. unions into the A.F. of L. were emphatically opposed by the Communist party leadership.

. . . The Party must conduct a sharp struggle against any liquidatory tendencies, and expose the slander and maneuvers of the renegades who call for the liquidation of the T.U.U.L. unions because they wish to strengthen the A. F. of L. bureaucracy, of which they have become a part. . . .<sup>41</sup>

*Abandonment of dual unionism.* Beginning late in 1934, however, Communists in the United States began to shift their emphasis from the T.U.U.L. unions to the A.F. of L. unions, and abandoned their efforts at establishing an Independent Federation of Labor. The likelihood of unifying the trade-union movement was no longer regarded as out of the question.<sup>42</sup> Browder declared:

. . . We are now able to say very clearly and definitely that the main task of the Party in the sphere of trade union work must be the work in the A. F. of L., so as to energetically and tirelessly mobilize the masses of their members in the trade unions as a whole for the defense of the everyday interests, the development of the policy of class struggle in the mass unions of the A. F. of L., fighting on the basis of trade union democracy, for the independent leadership of these struggles in spite of the sabotage and treachery of the reformist bureaucrats.<sup>43</sup>

Evaluating its policy of building independent, and in essence, dual unions, Communists declared that the labor movement was strengthened rather than weakened by this development, even though these unions would ultimately be liquidated.<sup>44</sup>

But it remained for the Seventh World Congress of the Comintern, as will presently be shown, finally and irrevocably to seal the doom of the movement for independent, revolutionary unions.

#### THE UNITED-FRONT-FROM-BELOW

The united front is a well-known tactic in the working-class movement. Differences in theory, strategy, and tactics have often separated groups of class-conscious workers. Despite these differences, common interests have often found the need of common action. A May Day parade, a Free-Tom-Mooney Rally, a Sacco-Vanzetti Memorial Meeting, are all instances where efforts toward unity for a specific and limited purpose have proved fruitful in the past. Such common action is generally known as a united front.

<sup>41</sup> C.P., U.S.A., *op. cit.*, p. 78.

<sup>42</sup> Browder, *op. cit.*, pp. 196-197.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.

<sup>44</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 209.

Efforts to secure a united front are usually directed toward the leadership of the other movement (or movements) with the objective of reaching an agreement that will bind the membership of both (or all) organizations concerned. This type of strategy is known as the united-front-from-above, or, since it is the most usual type of common action, simply as the united front.

When one of the organizations is hostile toward the policies of another and believes its leaders to be "betrayers of the working class," an appeal for unity is usually made by the former organization directly to the rank and file of the latter organization, over the heads of its leaders. This approach is known as the united-front-from-below. Although, as the Communists declared, they made use of both types of approaches from 1928 to 1935, the emphasis was overwhelmingly upon the united-front-from-below.<sup>45</sup>

This doctrine was a logical development of the Communist attitude toward other Marxian movements. Since the theory of social-fascism had evaluated the leadership of rival Marxian groups as defenders of capitalism because of their opposition to the strategy and tactics of the Communist party, little else remained to be done than to appeal to the masses directly, completely ignoring the leadership of these organizations.

The application of the "Class Against Class" policy requires the making of united front movement with workers who, while not prepared to accept the whole revolutionary program of the Communist party, nevertheless are willing to struggle for immediate, partial demands. . . . United front organs may take a variety of forms, such as joint strike committees, shop committees, grievance committees, relief committees, defense committees, etc., being composed in each case of representatives of all the unions, A. F. of L. and revolutionary, as well as of the unorganized workers in the given situation. The united front is organized from the bottom; that is, not with the reactionary leaders of the various labor organizations, but with the rank and file workers.<sup>46</sup>

. . . We are for the united front from below as "*the fundamental form of the united front.*" . . . This does not exclude the application of the united front from above. The Communist Party of the U. S. has been applying the policy of both the united front from below and from above, and in doing so it was guided by the proposition that "In many cases even now it will be possible to get a united front only from below, but there cannot be a united front which comes only from above."<sup>47</sup>

. . . We need a fighting united front of the workers against the capitalists and all their agents. But that means that unity must be built up, not *with* these leaders on their present policies, but *against* them. That means not a united front from the top, but a united front built up by the workers from below in the organization and struggle for their immediate needs.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 51-55, 212-213.

<sup>46</sup> Foster, *Toward Soviet America*, pp. 253-254.

<sup>47</sup> Bittelman, *The Advance of the United Front*, p. 25.

<sup>48</sup> Browder, *op. cit.*, p. 52.



An important strategic aim of the united-front-from-below was to win converts to the Communist party from other mass organizations. Although the leaders of these organizations had placed themselves out of the pale of Marxism by the policies they had been pursuing, Communists alleged, their following had not been tainted. Members of the Communist party proclaimed it their duty to win over these woefully misguided and misled workers by exposing the alleged corrupt, antiworking class policies of their leaders.

. . . In order to win the workers from the influence of the Socialist Party, it is necessary to carry on the most patient, detailed explanation, information, argumentation, with all the workers who are under the influence of the Socialist Party. We will never win these workers away from the Socialist Party merely by calling them social fascists. The workers who follow the Socialist Party are not social fascists. Their leaders are social fascist, and it is they and their program that give the social-fascist character to their party.<sup>49</sup>

The united front is not a peace pact with the reformists. The united front is a method of struggle against the reformists, against the social fascists, for the possession of the masses. . . .<sup>50</sup>

Subsequent negotiations on the part of the Communist party for a united-front-from-above with the Socialist party leadership met with no affirmative response from Norman Thomas, for which both were condemned.<sup>51</sup>

#### THE LABOR PARTY<sup>52</sup>

*No opposition in principle.* Although the Communist party continuously pointed out the dangers inherent in a Labor party movement, at no time during this period (1928-1935) did it oppose the Labor party on principle. The following directives were promulgated by the Sixth World Congress on this issue:

On the question of the organizing of the Labor Party, the Congress resolves that the Party concentrate its attention on the work in the trade unions, on organizing the unorganized, etc., and in this way lay the basis for the practical realization of the slogan of a broad Labor Party organized from below.<sup>53</sup>

*Conditions not ripe.* Communist leaders have confessed that from 1929 to 1934 the party came out ". . . against all of the current proposals then being made for the organization of a Labor Party."<sup>54</sup> The Seventh Na-

<sup>49</sup> Browder, *The Meaning of Social Fascism*, pp. 41-42.

<sup>50</sup> Browder, *Communism in the United States*, p. 149.

<sup>51</sup> Bittelman, *op. cit.*, pp. 43-61.

<sup>52</sup> Browder, *Communism in the United States*, Chapters IX, XVI.

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Browder and Stachel, *How Do We Raise the Question of a Labor Party?* p. 2.

<sup>54</sup> *Idem.* Also see Bittelman, *Milestones in the History of the Communist Party*, pp. 81-83.

tional Convention of the Communist party, held in 1930, expressed the official viewpoint when it declared that a Labor party organized at that particular time would make the workers prey to their social-fascist enemies.

. . . Any Labor Party crystallization at this moment could have only the A.F.L. unions, the Socialist Party and other social-reformist organizations as a basis, or would be composed only of those already in sympathy with the Communist Party. A Labor Party made up of social-fascist organizations would not mean political separation of the workers from the capitalists but would mean the delivery of the workers to capitalist politics under the guise of a Labor Party. . . .<sup>55</sup>

But by 1934, an alleged change in objective conditions—the "disillusionment of the masses with the old political parties and their determination to break away"—once more made the question of the Labor party a practical one.<sup>56</sup>

*Basic Labor party orientation.* The Communist party thesis for a labor party was in accord with its basic orientation of social-fascism and united-front-from-below. Given a correct program, the discontented masses, especially in the trade unions and unemployed organizations, who were not yet ready for membership in the Communist party, could be rallied into a labor party. But, argued the Communists, this party would have to be formed "from below"; that is, the social-fascist leadership—the A.F. of L. bureaucracy, the Socialist hierarchy, etc.—would have to be rigorously excluded, or the workers would be betrayed once more.<sup>57</sup>

The Communist party rejected the idea of forming a "Progressive" or "People" or "Farmer-Labor" or "Labor" party "based on the La Follette, Sinclair, Olson, Long movements and typified by these leaders and their program. . . ."<sup>58</sup> It regarded these as too amorphous in principle to become a militant party of labor; such a party would rather tend to become a "third party of capitalism."

A "Labor" Party dominated by a section of the trade union bureaucracy and the Socialist leaders and excluding the Communists could not serve the interests of the masses in any way. A party dominated by John L. Lewis, Gorman, Dubinsky, Waldman, Panken and company, even if it were based on the trade unions, would not be a genuine Labor party. It would not result in independent class political action on the part of the workers.<sup>59</sup>

<sup>55</sup> Central Committee Plenum, *Thesis and Resolutions for the Seventh National Convention of the Communist Party of U. S. A.*, p. 15.

<sup>56</sup> Browder and Stachel, *op. cit.*, p. 3. Browder, *Communism in the United States*, pp. 201-202.

<sup>57</sup> Amter, *A Labor Party for New York Workers*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>58</sup> Browder, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

<sup>59</sup> Browder and Stachel, *op. cit.*, p. 15. Also see Browder, *op. cit.*, p. 288.

Speaking of these same "labor" leaders, the *Daily Worker* declared:

. . . The ability of the Communists to expose these people, and swing the masses away from their influence, will be the decisive factor which will determine which road the masses will take in their breakaway from the old capitalist parties.<sup>60</sup>

Thus it can be seen that the Communists do not propose to build up a reformist Labor Party which would be controlled by the labor lieutenants of the capitalist class. The Communist Party, by participating with the masses in a broad class struggle Labor Party will further their class consciousness. It will educate them through their experiences and struggles so that the common fight against the interests of private property will lead to revolutionary struggle for the dictatorship of the proletariat and the overthrow of the capitalist scheme of things.<sup>61</sup>

The Communist party regarded the following as the type of labor party it would support:

A Labor Party built up from below, on a trade union basis but in conflict with the bureaucracy, with a program of demands closely associated with mass struggles, strikes, etc., with a decisive role in the leadership played by militant elements, including the communists.<sup>62</sup>

What *kind* of a Labor Party do we need? What the workers want and need is a *real fighting Labor Party*. It should be a party built upon *the local unions of the American Federation of Labor and independent unions, on the unemployment organizations*. It should be a party with a *fighting program*, taking up the *daily immediate needs* of the workers and poor farmers. Its program should consist at least of demands for the unrestricted right to organize into bona fide trade unions, for the right to strike and picket, against injunctions and company unionism, for full and equal rights for Negroes, for adequate cash relief for the unemployed, for trade union rates on all relief projects, for an immediate building construction program, for genuine unemployment and social insurance . . . , for a genuine child labor bill, for immediate cash relief for the farmers and cancellation of all debts, against fascism and war.<sup>63</sup>

The Labor Party should be built upon the basis of the affiliation of trade unions, unemployed, fraternal, farm and other organizations. Such affiliation would not interfere with the functioning of the trade unions, unemployment organizations, etc. These organizations would continue to act in the interests of their membership on the economic field, but would unite their forces on the political field in the Labor Party in order to carry out joint action in the interests of all workers. . . .<sup>64</sup>

*Build the Communist party.* Despite its advocacy of a labor party, Communist leaders insisted upon the necessity for building the Communist party concomitantly with any labor party activities; if the latter were built

<sup>60</sup> *Daily Worker*, March 8, 1935, p. 7.

<sup>61</sup> *Ibid.*, February 12, 1935, p. 7.

<sup>62</sup> Browder, *op. cit.*, p. 202.

<sup>63</sup> *Amter, op. cit.*, p. 11.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

up at the expense of the Communist party itself, the very purpose for its organization would be lost.

The Labor Party, even a genuine Labor Party, is not and cannot be a substitute for the Communist Party. . . . The Communist Party sees in the Labor Party not a competing organization, not a substitute organization, but rather a means through which the Communist Party can aid in setting the masses on the road of independent class political action, on the basis of their immediate interests and understanding, but with the hope and the knowledge that in the course of the struggle and as a result of the experience of the struggles, the masses will learn that only a program of the Communist Party provides the means for the lasting solutions of the problems of the workers.<sup>65</sup>

During this entire period, the position taken on the labor party was chiefly that of a theoretical formulation. The Communist party emphasized that it wanted to crystallize sentiment, but that the initiative would have to come from other sources.<sup>66</sup> All in all, for many reasons, the Communists were not successful in building a labor party conceived in their pattern.

(The sections on the Negro question, immediate demands, and the New Deal have been omitted in this abridgment.)

<sup>65</sup> Browder and Stachel, *op. cit.*, p. 12. Also see Browder, *Communism in the United States*, p. 285.

<sup>66</sup> Browder, *op. cit.*, pp. 203-204.



## CHAPTER XVIII

THE COMMUNIST PARTY—ANALYSIS OF DEMOCRACY,  
FASCISM, AND WAR (SINCE 1935)

## PRINCIPLES OF MARXISM-LENINISM-STALINISM

During the period ushered in by the Seventh World Congress (1935), the Communist International and its many sections adopted the People's Front orientation. This, they maintained, did not alter their fundamental conceptions of Marxism-Leninism, but simply restated their strategy and tactics in the light of new objective conditions.

As Foster declared, their contention was that: "The Stalinist policy of the People's Front is the old Marxian-Leninist policy of the united front applied to present day conditions of struggle. . . ."<sup>1</sup>

They further alleged that the new strategy and tactics would "... create the favorable conditions for the overthrow of capitalist rule altogether, the establishment of Soviet power and the building of socialism."<sup>2</sup>

THE STATE<sup>3</sup>

The traditional Marxist-Leninist view of the state as an instrument of oppression, exploitation, and coercion, and an executive committee of the ruling capitalist class which would have to be overthrown forcibly did not receive emphasis in the formulations of the Communist party during this period. The stress, if at all, was distinctly the other way. In the United States, for example, the Communist party presented itself as the upholder of democracy and the American system, and the foe of force and violence. The conception of a violent overthrow of capitalism, while not repudiated,<sup>4</sup> was replaced by the idea that socialism would not be ushered in until a majority of the American people desired it.<sup>5</sup>

1. The Communist Party opposes the overthrow of American democracy. On the contrary, it supports American democracy and urges the widest possible common front of supporters of democracy in order to maintain it.

2. The Communist Party does not advocate force and violence. It is not a party of anarchists, terrorists, or conspirators. By no stretch of the imagination does it come under the terms of the criminal anarchy statute or any law patterned after that statute.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Foster, *From Bryan to Stalin*, p. 331.

<sup>2</sup> C.P., U.S.A., *Resolutions of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>3</sup> The reader is urged to compare the views on the state, democracy, fascism, and war presented here with those expressed by the Sixth World Congress, *supra*.

<sup>4</sup> Browder, *What Is Communism?* p. 120.

<sup>5</sup> Browder, *The People's Front*, p. 266.

<sup>6</sup> Earl Browder, *Daily Worker*, March 16, 1938, pp. 1, 4. Also see *Daily Worker*, May 14, 1938, p. 6. Browder, *The People's Front*, pp. 112, 197, 209, 266.

The Communist Party is not and has not been the advocate of force and violence. . . .<sup>7</sup>  
*We of the Communist Party never did and never will hold to a program of forcible establishment of socialism against the will of the people. . . .*<sup>8</sup>

Some day, the message of socialism, of communism—that the people will have true democracy only when the people control their economic destiny through their taking over of the country's industries and national wealth—will have majority support. . . .<sup>9</sup>

## DEMOCRACY: MEANING AND NATURE

During the period following the Seventh World Congress, the deceptions, shortcomings, and inadequacies of "democracy" as the Communists saw them during the period of the Sixth World Congress were also not emphasized. No longer was democracy presented as a mask for bourgeois dictatorship, as the sure road to fascism when the economic contradictions of capitalism could no longer be resolved. Instead it became something worth fighting to preserve; it was not defined in nonantagonistic terms.

*Defense of democracy.* Earl Browder presented a simple definition. He declared: "Democracy is the self-rule of the people, and in the final analysis the rule of the majority. . . ."<sup>10</sup>

The new problem posed was no longer that of overthrowing the masked dictatorship known as "capitalist democracy." Instead, it was "... the problem of finding an effective policy to maintain peace and democracy. . . ."<sup>11</sup>

Browder further declared, after presenting the position of the Communist party on war and peace (to be considered shortly), that: "On the basis of these views, the Communist Party offers its cooperation to all honest democrats, progressives and lovers of peace. . . ."<sup>12</sup>

Shortcomings of democracy were still pointed out. These deficiencies, however, were not held to be inherent in the nature of democracy and the democratic state, but rather in the threat of the "economic royalists" who were prepared to bolt democracy for fascism when the former threatened to take away the special privileges they enjoyed.

. . . So long as the democratic forms of government follow the leadership of the oligarchs of industry, the economic royalists, these forms are tolerated and even defended by them. When, however, as today has clearly shown, there is a conscious split between the mass of the democratic electorate, and the economic rulers, then as Roosevelt pointed out in his Constitution Day speech last year, the economic royalists began to question why they should continue to support a democracy which threatens to curtail their special privileges, and they begin to turn toward fascism. . . ."<sup>13</sup>

<sup>7</sup> Browder, *The People's Front*, p. 209.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 206.

<sup>9</sup> Howard, *This 4th of July*, p. 13.

<sup>10</sup> Browder, *Daily Worker*, April 30, 1938, p. 9.

<sup>11</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>12</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>13</sup> *Idem.*



## FASCISM: MEANING AND NATURE

Since the Seventh World Congress the Communist analysis of fascism as "the open, terrorist dictatorship of monopoly capital. . ."<sup>14</sup> has remained unchanged; what was formerly said was repeated with added emphasis, in identical terms.<sup>15</sup>

*Democracy versus fascism.* As has already been indicated, under its previous orientation, Communist theoreticians maintained that bourgeois democracy and fascism are identical in their essential aspects; that the difference is one of form and method rather than principle; that bourgeois democracy breeds fascism; that the latter is an inevitable growth of the former.<sup>16</sup>

Since the Seventh World Congress, however, Communists have contended that democracy is different from fascism; that the fight to preserve democracy is well worth undertaking; that the defense of democracy is a progressive step in the fight against fascism.

Browder expressed this new viewpoint thus:

Fascism is something quite distinct from American democracy, and the difference can be symbolized in the contrast between Hitler and Roosevelt. We have many threatening signs of fascism in the United States, coming from Wall Street and Liberty League sources, which have enormous powers in their hands; but fortunately, America is not under the unconditional rule of these circles, a fact which is witnessed by their rage and hatred against President Roosevelt and his policies.<sup>17</sup>

As a corollary to the People's Front orientation, the Seventh Congress held that the slogan, "Socialism versus Capitalism," was inopportune in the struggle against fascism; "Democracy versus Fascism" was held to be more appropriate.<sup>18</sup> Communists pledged themselves to defend democracy against the inroads of fascism.<sup>19</sup>

. . . Today the proletariat in most capitalist countries are not confronted with the alternative of bourgeois democracy or proletarian democracy; they are confronted with the alternative of bourgeois democracy or fascism. Today, the slogan, bourgeois democracy, is a step forward compared with fascism. . .<sup>20</sup>

. . . For the broad masses also, socialism is not the issue today, but rather the issue is, whether to move on the reactionary road toward fascism, or to struggle to maintain democratic rights, living standards, and peace. . . . Thus, we conclude that the direct

<sup>14</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>15</sup> Dimitroff, *Working Class Unity—Bulwark Against Fascism*, pp. 7-13.

<sup>16</sup> *Supra.*

<sup>17</sup> Browder, *Daily Worker*, April 30, 1938, p. 9.

<sup>18</sup> Browder, *The Communists in the People's Front*, p. 7.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Pieck, *Freedom, Peace and Bread!* p. 103.

<sup>20</sup> Manuilsky, *The Work of the Seventh Congress*, p. 19.

issue of the 1936 elections is not socialism or capitalism, but rather democracy or fascism. . .<sup>21</sup>

. . . It is the main purpose of the Communist Party . . . to further in every way the building of such a united front against reaction. That is why we say the issue is democracy or fascism, progress or reaction—an issue for which the broad potential People's Front is prepared, upon which it can be organized now, and not the ultimate issue of socialism or capitalism, a choice which the progressive forces are not ready to make.<sup>22</sup>

Foster attempted to reconcile both viewpoints when he declared:

. . . The present vital issue is democracy versus fascism, but the struggle tends inevitably to raise for solution the basically revolutionary question of Socialism versus capitalism.<sup>23</sup>

*Fighting fascism.* While the Comintern formerly maintained that the growth of fascism could be checked and effectively fought only by revolutionary Marxism, by the destruction of bourgeois democracy, and by the establishment of proletarian dictatorships, its new position was that fascism could be forestalled and defeated at home by People's Front governments which would effectively rally all the opponents of fascism into a large, all-inclusive, anti-fascist front.

The only correct policy for the working class is the one of independent political action in alliance with the toiling farmers, Negroes and middle class. . . . It means the utmost development of the united front of the working class and its organizations and the building up of a powerful People's Front—A Farmer-Labor Party—as a coalition of the working class, the toiling farmers, Negroes, and middle class against capitalist reaction, fascism and war. This and only this will mobilize the masses into an effective barrier to reaction and fascism and will thus create the conditions for higher forms of struggle—for the Socialist revolution, Soviet power and socialism.<sup>24</sup>

Internationally, fascism was to be defeated by the formation of collective security pacts entered upon by the great "democracies"—the United States, France, Great Britain—with the Soviet Union.<sup>25</sup> Confronted by such a formidable array of united strength, fascism would be stopped short in its own footsteps and would steadily lose ground thereafter.<sup>26</sup>

## WAR

*Defend the Soviet Union.* The war position enunciated by the Seventh World Congress took as its basis and starting point the necessity of defend-

<sup>21</sup> Browder, *Report of the Central Committee to the Ninth National Convention of the Communist Party of the U.S.A.*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>22</sup> Browder, *The People's Front*, p. 108.

<sup>23</sup> Foster, *From Bryan to Stalin*, p. 329.

<sup>24</sup> C.P., U.S.A., *Report of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party*, p. 17.

<sup>25</sup> Hathaway, *Collective Security—The Road to Peace*, pp. 3-15.

<sup>26</sup> For further details, consult Communist party position on war, *infra*.



ing and preserving the Soviet Union at all costs. This could be accomplished best, it was declared, by carrying out the latter's peace policy.

... We must make the defense of the U.S.S.R. the starting point for a broad, general people's front of classes, of organizations and of political parties which are beginning to render the U.S.S.R. active support. . . .<sup>27</sup>

... Today, *the defense of the U.S.S.R.* determines the main line of policy of the world proletariat in relation to war; whereas in 1914, the best proletarian revolutionaries adopted the position of defeat of one's imperialist government in war. . . .<sup>28</sup>

For us it is absolutely indisputable that there is a complete identity of aim between the peace policy of the Soviet Union and the policy of the working class and Communist Parties of the capitalist countries. There is not, and cannot be, any doubt in our ranks on this subject. We not only defend the Soviet Union in general, but we defend concretely its whole policy and each of its actions. . . .<sup>29</sup>

... Is it not clear, therefore, that every effort to fight for peace, against fascism, requires in every country that we should take as our basis and starting point the peace policy of the Soviet Union? Is it not clear that everyone who rejects or casts doubt upon that peace policy is helping the fascists and the war makers?<sup>30</sup>

The role of the U.S.S.R. is growing as *the bulwark of peace among nations*. . . . The policy of the Soviet Union is a policy of peace. The fact that the Soviet Union pursues a policy of peace is not accidental, is not dependent upon any transient state of things. This policy is organically connected with the very nature of Soviet power, with the entire history of its development, with all that it is and does.<sup>31</sup>

*Soviet Union's peace policy.* The peace policy of the U.S.S.R., directed toward halting the advances of the fascist powers, has become the pivotal point about which all policies adopted by the Communist International have revolved. Its two cardinal features have been the following: (1) support of the League of Nations; (2) negotiation of collective security pacts between the Soviet Union and the great "democracies" against fascist aggressor nations.

*Support the League of Nations.* The Seventh World Congress completely reversed the historical position which the Communist International had always taken on the League of Nations. Although specifically holding that neither the Soviet Union nor the Communist International was strictly in accord with many of the aims of capitalist adherents to the League,<sup>32</sup> the general argument advanced was that a change in world conditions made support of the League not merely permissible but actually desirable and necessary.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>27</sup> Manuilsky, *Rise of Socialism in the Soviet Union*, p. 54.

<sup>28</sup> Manuilsky, *The Work of the Seventh Congress*, p. 23.

<sup>29</sup> Ercoli, *The Fight for Peace*, p. 57.

<sup>30</sup> Browder, *New Steps in the United Front*, p. 5.

<sup>31</sup> E.C.C.I., *The Menace of a New World War*, p. 26.

<sup>32</sup> Browder, *Build the United People's Front*, pp. 18-19. Dutt, *World Politics—1918-1936*, p. 320.

<sup>33</sup> Browder, *The Communists in the People's Front*, p. 83.

In supporting the League, moreover, Communist theoreticians maintained that an abandonment of their former position was indicative that their policies were flexible and capable of moving with the times.

... The most aggressive countries have left the League of Nations: Japan in 1932, Germany in 1934, and the League of Nations, although formally making no alteration in its organization and statutes, nevertheless offers a certain obstacle to the realization of the plans of these powers and can be utilized to postpone the outbreak of war. The Soviet Union took this situation into account when it changed its attitude toward the League of Nations. The entry of the Soviet Union into the League of Nations showed the masses that the leaders of the Soviet Union are not doctrinaires, but Marxists who correctly appraise the relation of forces existing in the capitalist world and who know how to make use of even the smallest possibility to extend their action in defense of peace and in the interests of the revolution.<sup>34</sup>

... The withdrawal of the two most aggressive fascist states, Germany and Japan, from the League of Nations, and the fact that the U.S.S.R. has joined it, change the character of the League of Nations. The possibility is created of opposing the capitalist states which belong to the League of Nations to the fascist instigators of war; the possibility is created of utilizing the League of Nations in the interests of peace. . . .<sup>35</sup>

*Collective security.*<sup>36</sup> Although the Soviet Union found it necessary from time to time to conclude pacts and treaties with capitalist nations, the general skepticism if not open hostility of both the Comintern and the Soviet Union toward these agreements prior to 1935 has already been indicated.<sup>37</sup>

Briefly stated, these steps led up to the collective security policy adopted by the Seventh World Congress. In 1929, the Soviet Union signed a protocol implementing the Kellogg Peace Pact.<sup>38</sup> In 1933, the Soviet Union's definition of an "aggressor nation" was adopted by numerous bordering countries.<sup>39</sup> In 1934, the Soviet Union joined the League of Nations.<sup>40</sup> In 1935, the Soviet Union concluded an Eastern European Security Pact with France (Franco-Soviet Pact) and Czechoslovakia (Mutual Assistance Pact).<sup>41</sup>

Communists in the democratic countries (the United States, France, Great Britain, Czechoslovakia—the "non-aggressor" nations) have been required to call upon their governments to negotiate collective security pacts with each other and with the Soviet Union to put a halt to the belligerent acts of the fascist countries (Japan, Germany, and Italy—the "aggressor"

<sup>34</sup> Ercoli, *op. cit.*, p. 53.

<sup>35</sup> Manuilsky, *Work of the Seventh Congress*, p. 24.

<sup>36</sup> For general survey, see Dutt, *op. cit.*, pp. 161-170, 342-346. Ercoli, *op. cit.*, pp. 52-61. Browder, *Concerted Action or Isolation—Which Is the Road to Peace?* *passim*.

<sup>37</sup> *Supra*.

<sup>38</sup> Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 317. Browder, *The Communists in the People's Front*, pp. 83-86.

<sup>39</sup> Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 317.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 319.

<sup>41</sup> *Idem*. Thorez, *The People's Front in France*, pp. 15-16. E.C.C.I., *The Menace of a New World War*, pp. 31-32. Browder, *What Is Communism?* pp. 173-174.



nations). Concerted action is to be taken, if necessary, against the fascist aggressors by a show of collective strength coupled with the threat of applying economic sanctions against them, in order to "quarantine" them.

C. A. Hathaway, editor of the *Daily Worker*, has said, in support of the Communist position:

... We urged a realistic foreign policy which would definitely distinguish between an aggressor and the victim of aggression, between fascist nations and democratic nations, between nations bent on enslaving other nations and nations striving to maintain their independence. We urged a foreign policy based on concerted action by the democratic nations against fascist aggressors with the aim of protecting world peace and democracy. To that end we urged that the United States cooperate with the Soviet Union, with France, England and all other democratic nations in collective efforts to stop the fascist nations from placing peace and democracy in jeopardy everywhere.<sup>42</sup>

This is a time for clear, hard thinking. It is a time when it is fruitless to talk of peace in the abstract. To work effectively for peace today, one must concentrate all efforts around one central aim, namely, *to stop the wars that are now in progress, to stop the fascist aggressors, Germany, Italy and Japan*. This can be accomplished only through achieving concerted action by the peace-loving, democratic nations, and by a united, world-wide peace movement, based, in the first place, on a united trade union movement. ... The Communists are bending their efforts in that direction. ...<sup>43</sup>

Communist leaders were emphatic in their denial that the application of sanctions, implicit in their thesis, would lead to war. According to their analysis, the very opposite would be the result.

... It is claimed further that sanctions against the aggressors will lead to war and that pacts for collective security and mutual assistance raise illusions and lead to war also. The contrary is the truth. The increasing danger of war arises at this time just because the fascist aggressors feel that they can go ahead with impunity. The greater the number of states, especially the biggest states in the world, which join the collective security pacts, and the greater the unanimity and consistency with which they stand for the real carrying out of such measures under the constant pressure of the masses of the people, the less will German fascism and the Japanese military clique be determined to begin war because this will mean all the greater risks for them. ...<sup>44</sup>

Communists have asserted that they are familiar with all the shortcomings of collective security, which to them is but a temporary tactic in the struggle against capitalism whose downfall alone will solve the problem of war.

... Collective security is no permanent solution of the problem of war, but at the best a temporary stopgap against the immediate menace of war. ... Neither the artificial stabilisation of collective security, if conceived as a permanent system, nor the destructive path of fascist war, can offer any solution for the world problems which gave

<sup>42</sup> Hathaway, *op. cit.*, pp. 4-5.

<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>44</sup> C.P., U.S.A., *Resolutions of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party*, p. 51.

rise to war, because the conditions of imperialism exclude any solution. The final solution lies outside the conditions of imperialism. ... The fight for collective security is only a temporary weapon in this struggle.<sup>45</sup>

*A foreign policy for the United States.* In the United States, the Communist conception of collective security was best expressed by the ninth plank of the 1938 Program of the League for Peace and Democracy which the Communist party endorsed as its own:<sup>46</sup>

(9) Demand a foreign policy based on: The distinction between the aggressors and their victims. The necessity of denying our economic resources to the war-making, treaty-breaking aggressors and opening them up to their victims under conditions designed to remove the risk of our being drawn into war. The necessity of concerted action to quarantine aggressors.<sup>47</sup>

The Communist party was especially bitter against those who, opposing collective security, hoped to find peace by pursuing a policy of isolation reinforced by neutrality legislation. Communists scored this aloofness as no way out of the dilemma; on the contrary, such a policy would encourage the fascists rather than restrain them.<sup>48</sup>

... We must show the masses that their desire to keep America out of war can be accomplished not by any means of isolation, but by following a consistent and truly international peace policy. We must explain that the only way to fight seriously against war is by the independent action of the toilers against the war makers, using this action at the same time for pressure on the League of Nations and Roosevelt government, in favor of measures for peace and for cooperation with the Soviet Union.<sup>49</sup>

Isolation, no matter how well intentioned, helps the forces of war; makes easier the outbreak of another world conflict into which the United States would be drawn. ...<sup>50</sup>

... the Communist Party is fighting for a peace policy for the United States, for a policy that will keep America out of war by helping the peace-loving and democratic peoples of other lands to keep war out of the world. We condemn the stupid and hypocritical "neutrality" law, which threatens to drag America into a new world war by directly encouraging the war-making fascist powers. We propose that the U. S. should base its foreign policy squarely upon the Kellogg-Briand Pact of Paris, by which fifty nations have pledged us to refrain from war, and upon the Nine-Power Pact which guarantees peace in the Pacific; that whenever any nation violates these pledges so solemnly made,

<sup>45</sup> Dutt, *op. cit.*, p. 170.

<sup>46</sup> Hathaway, *op. cit.*, p. 9.

<sup>47</sup> From the Program of the American League for Peace and Democracy adopted by the League at its Congress held in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, November 26-28, 1937.

<sup>48</sup> For additional statements regarding the Communist party's war position in the United States, see Browder, *The People's Front*, pp. 73, 185, 273; *Talks to America*, p. 25; *The Communists in the People's Front*, pp. 80-88. C.P., U.S.A., *Resolutions of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party*, pp. 42-53.

<sup>49</sup> Browder, *What Is Communism?* p. 176.

<sup>50</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 178.



the U. S. shall register that fact, and throw the moral and economic power of this country into the balance against the war-makers by severing economic connections with them (but not with their victims) until peace is restored and their pledges made good. We propose the fullest co-operation of the U. S. with every nation which wants peace, for common restraint of the war-makers, and for the Pacific—a Pacific Pact of Non-Aggression. We hold that war anywhere in the world is a disaster for all and threatens the peace of all. We hold that only international co-operation along these lines holds any hope for preserving the peace of the world. We give our efforts to organize the people of America to urge such a policy upon our government.<sup>51</sup>

At the same time, in order to give aid to the “victims of fascist aggression” and to “quarantine the aggressors,” the Communist party has urged such measures as the placing of an embargo upon trade, especially war supplies, against Japan, Italy, and Germany, and the lifting of the embargo against Loyalist Spain.<sup>52</sup>

*Ludlow Referendum on War.* The Communist party, United States, has opposed the Ludlow Resolution introduced into the United States Congress, which, in essence, required that all war declarations (except in the case of actual invasion) be submitted to the people of the United States before any action could be taken by Congress.<sup>53</sup>

The Ludlow amendment . . . contributes nothing itself to the prevention of war, and it lulls the people into a false security. It leads them to believe that they can keep out of the present wars now sweeping over the world by a simple resolution at some future date. . . . The problem today is not how war is to be declared. It is how war is to be prevented. The question so far as democracy is concerned is: how can the people be given a greater say *now* in stopping war, in preventing the United States from being drawn into wars which the fascist aggressor nations are forcing on the world. The answer is: give the people the right to decide on our country's foreign policy today; let them decide now between the outworn isolationism which leads to war, or the true peace policy urged by Roosevelt in his Chicago speech, the policy of concerted action by the peace-desiring nations against the fascist aggressors.<sup>54</sup>

#### INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS

The Communist party has stood solidly behind the position taken by the Communist International and the Soviet Union in foreign affairs. Space does not permit an extended presentation of much that is implicit in premises already set forth. A few words, however, will be devoted to its attitude on the Soviet Union and the Spanish Civil War.

<sup>51</sup> Browder, *The People's Front*, p. 273.

<sup>52</sup> Browder, *What Is Communism?* p. 179.

<sup>53</sup> Hathaway, *Collective Security: The Road to Peace*, pp. 10–15.

<sup>54</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

*The Soviet Union.* The Communist party has been loud in its praise of the policies and achievements of the Soviet Union.<sup>55</sup>

The Soviet Union is a living proof of the correctness of the analysis and revolutionary Socialist program worked out by Marx and Engels three generations ago. . . . In a word, the Soviet Union has broken with the ages-old system of slavery that has kept the masses for so long in misery, poverty and servitude; it has found the basic solution to the great economic and political problems of mankind and it is now blazing the way for all humanity to that rational and happy system of society worthy of human beings, and for which the best minds of man have dreamed and fought throughout history.

The U.S.S.R. has been able to give the world this practical demonstration of the validity of Socialism only after the most incredible struggles and hardships. No people have ever been so severely put to the test as the Russian workers and peasants. . . . With their great Communist Party, brilliantly headed first by Lenin and then by Stalin, they have conquered all these difficulties, which the capitalist world had declared to be a thousand times impossible.

. . . So plain is the success of the new Socialism that even the most backward must recognize it. The U.S.S.R. has become a great beacon of hope and guidance to the exploited masses all over the capitalist world and its revolutionizing influence before them is far-reaching and ever-increasing.<sup>56</sup>

Economically, it has endorsed the “substantial achievements” of the Soviet Union; it has accepted with enthusiasm the reports of the successes of the Soviet Five-Year Plans and the increased output of the U.S.S.R.;<sup>57</sup> it has hailed the destruction of classes within the Soviet Union;<sup>58</sup> it has likewise noted with satisfaction the complete solution of capitalism's unemployment problem.<sup>59</sup>

Politically, it has lauded the new Soviet Constitution as the great guarantee of democracy to the Soviet people, and the best and greatest example of genuine democracy in the world.<sup>60</sup>

. . . Despite the lies of the international capitalist mouthpieces, in no country in the world is there so much real democracy as in the Soviet Union. Nowhere have the toilers such a great political organization as the Communist Party, and their trade unions, co-operatives, and cultural organizations exist on a scale that utterly dwarfs those in other countries, both regarding their size and the breadth of their functions. The new Soviet Constitution raises this fundamental and growing liberty to a higher stage. This document is, as Stalin says, “the only thoroughly democratic constitution in all the world.”

<sup>55</sup> Browder, *What Is Communism?* pp. 213–225. Foster, *From Bryan to Stalin*, pp. 318–320. Stalin, *The New Constitution*, pp. 19–20.

<sup>56</sup> Foster, *op. cit.*, pp. 318–320.

<sup>57</sup> Stalin, *The Results of the First Five Year Plan*, pp. 22–23, 61–62. Browder, *op. cit.*, pp. 215–217. Dimitroff, *Resolutions—Seventh Congress of the Communist International*, pp. 49–50. Manuilsky, *The Rise of Socialism in the Soviet Union*, pp. 14–20, 23–25.

<sup>58</sup> Stalin, *The New Soviet Constitution*, pp. 7, 9, 13.

<sup>59</sup> Foster, *op. cit.*, p. 318. Browder, *op. cit.*, pp. 216–217.

<sup>60</sup> Foster, *Questions and Answers on the Piatakov-Radek Trial*, pp. 36–38. Stalin, *The New Constitution*, pp. 11–16.



. . . The Russian workers and farmers are building the first real classless democracy in the history of the world.<sup>61</sup>

The Communist party has also regarded the Soviet Union as the mightiest bulwark against fascism<sup>62</sup> and the greatest force for peace.<sup>63</sup>

. . . The role of the U.S.S.R. as a factor of peace among nations is growing. The peace policy of the Soviet Union is the policy of the whole of the international proletariat and of all toilers who hate imperialist wars and are fighting against them. Thanks to this policy, the U.S.S.R. is becoming the rallying center against war for classes, nations, peoples, and states which do not want war and are not interested in it. The role of the U.S.S.R. as the bulwark of the freedom of the peoples is growing. . . .<sup>64</sup>

*Spain.*<sup>65</sup> The fundamental basis of the Communist party's position on Spain has been its unqualified support of the Spanish People's Front,<sup>66</sup> a government which Communists were largely instrumental in creating.<sup>67</sup>

As positive aid to Spain from the workers of the United States, Communists have urged the lifting of the Arms Embargo by the repeal of the Neutrality Law as it has been made applicable to the Spanish Republican government.<sup>68</sup> The Communist party has also urged that all assistance to the fascist elements in the Spanish insurrection be stopped.<sup>69</sup>

The Spanish Republic is fully capable of settling accounts with Franco and the Spanish fascists in a few months, if the foreign armies are withdrawn and outside aid to Franco is stopped. The aim of our campaign is, therefore, to put a stop to the aid being given Franco; direct aid on the part of the fascist powers, and indirect aid on the part of the non-fascist powers.<sup>70</sup>

Among the aids to the rebel forces to which Communists have been opposed are loans, credit, trade; diplomatic recognition of belligerent rights; the policy of "non-intervention," which, they allege, has worked to the direct advantage of the fascist elements in Spain.<sup>71</sup>

American Communists have been active in soliciting funds for nonmili-

<sup>61</sup> Foster, *op. cit.*, p. 36.

<sup>62</sup> Manuilsky, *The Rise of Socialism in the Soviet Union*, pp. 37-38.

<sup>63</sup> Manuilsky, *op. cit.*, p. 57. Dutt, *op. cit.*, pp. 310-322. Cachin, Thorez, Marty, *The People's Front in France*, pp. 81-83. Foster, *op. cit.*, pp. 38-39. Dimitroff, *Resolutions—Seventh Congress of the Communist International*, pp. 42-43.

<sup>64</sup> Manuilsky, *The Work of the Seventh Congress*, p. 15.

<sup>65</sup> Gannes and Repard, *Spain in Revolt*. Ercoli, *The Spanish Revolution*. Gannes, *How the Soviet Union Helps Spain*. Browder, *Next Steps to Win the War in Spain*; *Lenin and Spain*; *The People's Front*, Ch. VIII. Dimitroff, *Two Years of Heroic Struggle of the Spanish People*.

<sup>66</sup> Ercoli, *op. cit.*, pp. 19-22. (Compare with earlier statement of Pieck, *Freedom, Peace and Bread!* pp. 46-51.)

<sup>67</sup> Lang, *Peace versus War—The Communist Position*, pp. 24-25.

<sup>68</sup> Browder, *Next Steps to Win the War in Spain*, p. 10.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 5-6.

<sup>70</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 6.

tary aid to Loyalist Spain among the antifascist elements in the United States. They have sent food, milk, clothing, and medical supplies through the offices of the North American Committee to Aid the Spanish Democracy.<sup>72</sup> Many Communists have fought in the Lincoln and Washington Battalions and some have been killed, captured, or wounded.<sup>73</sup>

Finally, on the basis of alleged documentary evidence,<sup>74</sup> Communists have demanded that the Spanish P.O.U.M. and the Trotskyists, whom they have identified as one, be suppressed and exposed as counterrevolutionary agents of fascism.<sup>75</sup>

One important guarantee of victory of republican Spain is its firm hand in suppressing the Trotskyite-P.O.U.M. agents of Franco, the most dangerous part of the infamous "fifth column" behind the republican lines. One year ago, they even had their representatives within the government and enjoyed full freedom of action for their treasonable and wrecking work. But when in May they resorted to armed insurrection against the Republic, and built barricades in the streets of Barcelona, they revealed themselves once for all in their true role of agents and helpers of fascism. . . .<sup>76</sup>

<sup>72</sup> Browder, *Next Steps to Win the War in Spain*, pp. 14-15; *The Communists in the People's Front*, pp. 77-78.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>74</sup> Soria, *Trotskyism in the Service of Franco—A Documented Record of Treachery by the P.O.U.M. in Spain*, *passim*.

<sup>75</sup> Browder, *Lenin and Spain*, pp. 14-15; *Next Steps to Win the War in Spain*, pp. 8-9.

<sup>76</sup> Browder, *Next Steps to Win the War in Spain*, p. 8.



## CHAPTER XIX

THE COMMUNIST PARTY—STRATEGY AND TACTICS  
(SINCE 1935)THE PEOPLE'S FRONT<sup>1</sup>

The new orientation formulated by the Seventh World Congress inevitably led to corresponding changes in strategy and tactics.

*Abandonment of social-fascism and united-front-from-below.* Since the purpose of the People's Front was to unite all opposition to war and fascism on a broad basis, Communists found it necessary to abandon, for the most part, their theory of social-fascism, their united-front-from-below tactics, and their earlier attitude on the labor party.

During the period from the Sixth to the Seventh World Congress, the united-front-from-below was relied upon almost exclusively for united action. It was chiefly an attempt to win away the following of other working-class parties and organizations, rather than to work directly with them.<sup>2</sup>

*Proposals of organic unity with Socialist party.* After the Seventh World Congress, attempts at genuine united-front agreements were made by the Communist International with the leadership of the Second (Socialist) International and the various Socialist parties throughout the world (the so-called united-front-from-above).<sup>3</sup> As a matter of fact, the call for united front was extended even further. Organic unity of the Socialist and Communist parties was urged by the latter.<sup>4</sup>

... we are opening up perspectives for the organic unity of Socialists and Communists in one revolutionary party of socialism.<sup>5</sup>

Dimitroff, general secretary of the Communist International, set forth the following as the basis of political unity:

This unification is possible only:

*First*, on condition of their *complete independence of the bourgeoisie and the complete rupture of the bloc of Social-Democracy with the bourgeoisie*;

*Second*, on condition that unity of action be first brought about;

*Third*, on condition that the necessity of the *revolutionary overthrow of the rule of*

<sup>1</sup> Browder, *The People's Front*, *passim*.

<sup>2</sup> Discussed, *supra*.

<sup>3</sup> *Sunday Worker*, May 24, 1936, p. 7. Browder, *New Steps in the United Front*, p. 11. Pieck, *Freedom, Peace and Bread!* p. 80. E.C.C.I., *The Menace of a New World War*, pp. 4, 7.

<sup>4</sup> Browder, *Build the United People's Front*, p. 42. Dimitroff, *Working Class Unity—Bulwark Against Fascism*, pp. 23, 51-56, 65.

<sup>5</sup> Browder, *New Steps in the United Front*, p. 19.

*the bourgeoisie and the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat in the form of Soviets* be recognized;

*Fourth*, on condition that support of one's own bourgeoisie in *imperialist war* be rejected;

*Fifth*, on condition that the Party be constructed on the basis of *democratic centralism*, which ensures unity of will and action, and has been tested by the *experience of the Russian Bolsheviks*.<sup>6</sup>

During these negotiations, Communists still continued to criticize the positions and policies of the Socialist party and its leaders. But the attitude taken was less intransigent and irreconcilable.<sup>7</sup> Norman Thomas, although still sharply criticized, was no longer denounced as a deliberate deceiver and enemy of the working class, but rather as one whose views were incorrect and mistaken.<sup>8</sup> Thus social fascism and united-front-from-below, as applied to other working-class organizations, were quietly abandoned, since these tactics were incompatible with the new policies pursued by the Communist International. Communists still maintained that their former characterization of social democracy as the twin of fascism, not its enemy, was sound, but that changes within the ranks of the social democracy made the application of the united-front tactic possible at this time.<sup>9</sup>

*All-inclusiveness of People's Front.* It should especially be noted that the People's Front orientation went far beyond the united front in its implications and practices. It enlarged the scope of unified action to include not merely working-class parties and organizations (the united front), but middle-class elements as well: church groups, youth organizations, liberal societies, and all others that agreed to accept the proposed minimum, anti-fascist program.

... Our aim in the People's Front is to organize the majority of the people in the shortest possible time, against the worst reactionaries and exploiters, and get the maximum possible control of the government in the hands of this progressive majority. . . .<sup>10</sup>

The non-socialist progressives may ask, why should we unite with those who want socialism, and who say openly they think the People's Front will ultimately give way to socialism? Our answer is: we grant you non-socialists the right to believe that the ultimate outcome will not be socialism, but in the meantime only our unity and common front will prevent fascism from being the immediate outcome; therefore it is better if we continue our debate on this question behind the common line of defense we set up against fascism which would stop all our discussions. To our allies in this fight against fascism, we pledge the use of democratic methods as the sole means of resolving ques-

<sup>6</sup> Dimitroff, *op. cit.*, p. 65.

<sup>7</sup> Manuilsky, *The Work of the Seventh Congress*, p. 31. E.C.C.I., *Resolutions of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International*, p. 29.

<sup>8</sup> Browder, *The People's Front*, pp. 167-172, 198.

<sup>9</sup> Manuilsky, *op. cit.*, pp. 17-18.

<sup>10</sup> Browder, *op. cit.*, p. 133.



tions in dispute between us. Whichever of us is correct in the last instance, the interests of both will be served by unity and a common front.<sup>11</sup>

The struggle for the People's Front, for democracy and peace, is at the same time the most effective struggle for socialism. . . .<sup>12</sup>

*People's Front not class-collaboration.* The Communist party has denied that there is any basic identity between its conception of the People's Front and that of the coalition governments advocated by Social Democrats. The coalition governments aimed at the preservation of capitalism, Communists have argued, whereas the People's Front is the first step toward the abolition of capitalism.

It is clear that this possible united front government before the proletarian revolution has nothing whatever in common with the reformist, the opportunist conception of coalition government. It has nothing in common with the unprincipled government blocs that have been formed by the Social-Democratic Parties in Europe together with sections of the bourgeoisie. We have not the slightest wish to revive these bankrupt and discredited practices of the Second International. Where this old coalition policy represented collaboration with the bourgeoisie to preserve capitalism from the attacks of the masses, the united front government in our perspective is on the contrary a vehicle of collaboration between the organizations of the masses in struggle against capitalism, of all anti-fascist parties and groups, in the interests of the entire toiling population.<sup>13</sup>

*A step toward socialism.* Communist theoreticians have further argued that People's Frontism, despite its many shortcomings, is a step toward socialism because of the training it gives workers for acquiring power.

. . . such struggles will create the favorable conditions for the overthrow of capitalist rule altogether, the establishment of Soviet power and the building of socialism.<sup>14</sup>

*Final salvation* this government *cannot bring*. It is not in a position to overthrow the class rule of the exploiters, and for this reason cannot finally eliminate the danger of fascist counter-revolution. Consequently, it is necessary to *prepare for the socialist revolution!* Soviet power and *only* Soviet power can bring such salvation!<sup>15</sup>

*The democratic front.* In the United States, the Tenth National Convention of the Communist party (May 1938) gave wide currency to a term which largely replaced "people's front" in party terminology. The new term used was the "democratic front."<sup>16</sup>

Such a program that the democratic front requires cannot be merely the random gathering together of the demands of particular groups, but must be hammered out into a consistent set of measures which are adjusted to one another, and meet the national

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 147.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 149.

<sup>13</sup> Browder, *New Steps in the United Front*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>14</sup> C.P., U.S.A., *Resolutions of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party*, pp. 11-12.

<sup>15</sup> Dimitroff, *op. cit.*, p. 55.

<sup>16</sup> Browder, *The Democratic Front*, *passim*.

situation as a whole. At the same time the program must base itself upon the most deeply felt needs and demands of the various strata of the population, the workers, farmers, and city middle classes.

The program must be such as the majority of the people already understand and support, must be capable of rallying the majority of the people behind it now. That means it cannot be a fundamental program of the socialist reorganization of American society, for which as yet not even a considerable minority of the masses has been won, not to speak of the majority. The socialist reorganization of our country is not yet on the order of the day as a practical political problem for the majority of the people. What is required, therefore, is a systematic series of measures of a progressive and democratic character, which can be formulated and put into operation within the limits of the present capitalist society.<sup>17</sup>

The program of the democratic front is not a socialist program. It is the minimum of those measures necessary, under capitalism, to preserve and extend democracy, all those things which have been the heart of the American tradition in the past, ever since the revolutionary foundation of the United States. The program of the democratic front is squarely based upon traditional Americanism.<sup>18</sup>

*Appeal to Catholics.* A characteristic example of its new approach in the United States was the appeal made to adherents of the Catholic faith to win them over to the support of a People's Front program in coöperation with the Communist party. Communists pointed out to members of the Catholic Church, among other things, that despite the differences which separated them, their mutual desire to prevent fascism from ravishing the United States was sufficient grounds for them to make common political cause.<sup>19</sup>

In a speech before the Tenth National Convention of the Communist party, Earl Browder declared:

Within the camp of democracy are included the great majority of members of the Catholic Church. We Communists extend the hand of brotherly cooperation to them, and express our pleasure to find ourselves fighting shoulder to shoulder with them for the same economic and social aims. . . .<sup>20</sup>

Fascism threatens not only the labor movement and the Communists. It threatens everything progressive and decent in human life. It threatens to destroy freedom of religion and the church, Catholic, Protestant, and Jewish. Surely in the face of this terrible menace, which hovers over America as well as Europe, we should all rise above differences to join hands for our common salvation, just as we would to meet some terrible natural calamity.<sup>21</sup>

*Appeal in fascist countries.* Communists were also urged to attempt to achieve a united-front-from-below with rank-and-file fascists in those coun-

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 87.

<sup>19</sup> Earl Browder, *Daily Worker*, May 30, 1938, p. 6; *The Democratic Front*, pp. 52-59; *A Message to Catholics*, pp. 7-15. Thorez, *Catholics and Communists*, *passim*.

<sup>20</sup> Browder, *A Message to Catholics*, p. 7.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.



tries where the Communist party was driven underground and its existence was illegal.

Communists must enter all *fascist mass organizations* which have a monopoly of legal existence in the given country, and must make use of even the smallest legal or semi-legal opportunity of working in them, in order to counterpose the interests of the masses in these organizations to the policy of fascism, and to undermine the mass basis of the latter. . . .<sup>22</sup>

In Italy, the Communist party made such overtures. The following are a few excerpts from its Manifesto:

Only the brotherly union of the people of Italy brought about by the reconciliation of fascists and non-fascists will be in a position to break down the power of the blood-suckers in our country and to enforce the fulfillment of those promises which have been made to the masses of the people for many years, without being kept.<sup>23</sup>

We proclaim that we are prepared to fight, together with you and the whole Italian people, for the carrying out of the fascist programme of 1919 and for every demand which represents a particular or general and immediate interest of the workers and people of Italy. . . .<sup>24</sup>

Let us reach out our hands to each other, children of the Italian nation, Fascists and Communists, Catholics and Socialists, people of all opinions, and let us march side by side to enforce the right of existence of the citizens of a civilised country, as ours is.<sup>25</sup>

*Exclusion of Lovestoneites and Trotskyists.* The notable exceptions to those included within the People's Front were the Lovestoneites and the Trotskyists. Instead of being called social-fascists, as formerly, they were now venomously scorned as out-and-out fascist betrayers who must be driven from the labor movement at all costs and with whom party members were forbidden to have any "personal or political relationships."<sup>26</sup>

#### THE AMERICAN PEOPLE'S FRONT: THE FARMER-LABOR PARTY<sup>27</sup>

*Necessity in the United States.* Because of the unique American Constitutional system, efforts of the Communist party to establish a People's Front in this country have taken the direction of a farmer-labor movement. Under the parliamentary system of Great Britain and France, for example, the most essential legislative and executive functions are exercised by the Prime Minister and the Cabinet chosen by agreement after election, from among the numerous blocs whose total membership comprises a majority

<sup>22</sup> E.C.C.I., *Resolutions of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International*, p. 33.

<sup>23</sup> Nicoletti, "Reconciliation of the Italian People for the Salvation of Italy," *International Press Correspondence* (August 22, 1936), 16: 38, p. 1,025.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1,026.

<sup>25</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>26</sup> The Communist party criticism of these groups is discussed in greater detail, *infra*.

<sup>27</sup> For a general survey, see Browder, *The People's Front*, pp. 155-166.

of Parliament. Under such a system, a People's Front government can be formed after the election by blocs which agree to support a minimum People's Front program.

In the United States, where there is a constitutional separation of legislative and executive functions, and where it is legally impossible for Congress to select the Cabinet and control the executive policies of the president, efforts to secure the adoption of given policies, and to obtain a harmony between the legislative and executive branches of the government, must be made before election. Consequently a political party with definite, formulated policies, similar to those proposed by a People's Front government, must be organized to secure the election of its candidates to the presidency and Congress.

This explains why the Communists in the United States have agitated for a farmer-labor party pledged to carry out a People's Front program, a policy laid down for them at the Seventh World Congress.<sup>28</sup>

The building of a Farmer-Labor Party at the present time is the most burning need of the working class of America, of the toiling farmers and of the middle classes. The building of such a party is the only way in which the working people of this country can seriously undertake to improve their intolerable conditions, to shift the burden of the crisis back to the shoulders of the rich, and to ward off the growing menace of capitalist reaction, fascism and war. It is the only way in which the working people can make an effective stand for their own interests in the national elections of 1936.<sup>29</sup>

The Farmer-Labor Party, conceived as the American equivalent of the People's Front in France, is taking shape and growing within the womb of the disintegrating two old parties. It will be born as a national party at the moment when it already replaces in the main one of the old traditional parties, contesting and possibly winning control of the federal government from the hour of its birth. What particular name the caprice of history may baptize it with is immaterial to us. This new party that is beginning to take shape before our eyes, involving a majority of the population, is what we Communists have in mind when we speak of a national Farmer-Labor Party, the American expression of the People's Front.<sup>30</sup>

The growing movement for a Farmer-Labor Party is the specific form of the people's front, which we Communists see as the only hope to defeat reaction. . . .<sup>31</sup>

*Broader conception of labor party.* The position taken by the Communist party before 1935 in support of a labor party was considerably different from its support of a farmer-labor party after that date. The mere change in title from labor party to farmer-labor party is indicative of a shifting emphasis to an all-inclusive party. Although the Communist party had al-

<sup>28</sup> Foster, *From Bryan to Stalin*, p. 337.

<sup>29</sup> C.P., U.S.A., *Resolutions of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party*, p. 27.

<sup>30</sup> Browder, *The Communists in the People's Front*, pp. 26-27.

<sup>31</sup> Browder, *The People's Front*, p. 109.



ways solicited the support of sharecroppers and farm workers, the new orientation made necessary a greater bid for the support of farm workers and small farm owners. In other words, the base of the movement was broadened considerably.

Formerly, its strategy of building a labor party was essentially "from below." The socialist leadership, the alleged A.F. of L. bureaucracy, and other non-Communist leaders of the working class were to be excluded.<sup>32</sup> After the Seventh World Congress, no such exclusion was attempted. Instead the Communist party appealed to all progressive groups, including the Socialist party and its leadership, to help build a farmer-labor party.

*Aims and objectives.* The basic aim of the farmer-labor party, like that of the People's Front in France, for example, was held to be that of rallying all the forces of democracy against those favoring fascism.

... Our aim in the People's Front is to organize the majority of the people in the shortest possible time, against the worst reactionaries and exploiters, and get the maximum possible control of the government in the hands of this progressive majority. . . .<sup>33</sup>

Such a party, of course, will be *neither* Socialist nor Communist. But it *must* be an anti-fascist and must *not* be an anti-Communist party. The program of this party must be directed against the banks, trusts and monopolies, against the principal enemies of the people who are gambling on its misfortunes. Such a party will be equal to its task only if it fights for genuine social legislation, for unemployment insurance; only if it fights for land for the white and black sharecroppers and for their liberation from the burden of debt; only if it works for the cancellation of the farmers' indebtedness; only if it fights for the equal status of the Negroes; only if it fights for the demands of the war veterans, and for the interests of the members of the liberal professions, the small business men, the artisans. And so on.<sup>34</sup>

A tentative program suggested for a farmer-labor party included the following provisions: (1) six-hour day, thirty-hour week; (2) recognition of the right of collective bargaining; (3) unemployment, old age, and other forms of social insurance, and relief for all unemployed workers and farmers; (4) a program of public works with the payment of union-wage scales; (5) the opening of closed factories by the government to supply jobs to the unemployed; (6) the abolition of sales taxes and the shifting of the burden of taxes to those with large incomes and fortunes; (7) payment of bonuses to war veterans; (8) relief measures to protect farmers and sharecroppers from evictions, foreclosures, etc., by government loans; (9) measures to help American youth, as sponsored by the American Youth Congress; (10) political, social, and economic rights for Negroes, particularly the

<sup>32</sup> Amter, *A Labor Party for New York Workers*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>33</sup> Browder, *op. cit.*, p. 133.

<sup>34</sup> Dimitroff, *Working Class Unity—Bulwark Against Fascism*, p. 31.

abolition of Jim Crowism and the enforcement of a death penalty for lynching; support of the National Negro Congress; (11) measures to preserve the democratic rights of all workers and to abolish the power of the Supreme Court to nullify social legislation; support of the initiative, referendum, and recall; (12) the elimination of graft and corruption in government; (13) outlawing use of professional strikebreakers, vigilantes, and the National Guard to break strikes; (14) support of a foreign policy of collective security; (15) full political and economic rights for women, with special protection against exploitation.<sup>35</sup>

#### THE AMERICAN APPROACH<sup>36</sup>

*The American revolutionary tradition.* In an effort to win wider support of its program and policies, since the Seventh World Congress the Communist party has endeavored to tie its activities with American history and the American "revolutionary tradition." This is not to imply that prior to the Seventh World Congress the Communist party did not attempt to identify its own activities in this country with an American revolutionary tradition. But the emphasis was not very great. In 1933, however, Browder prepared for the new policy of claiming for the Communist party "the heritage of 1776 and 1861" when he declared:

We are not un-American! Since when has it become un-American to revolt against oppression and tyranny! Since when is it un-American to call for revolutionary struggle to overthrow a tyrannical and destructive system? The United States was born in "treason" against King George and the British Empire. The United States was born in revolutionary struggle. It was born in the confiscation of the private property of the feudal landlords. The good old American tradition of revolution is today kept alive *only* by the Communist Party. We are the only true Americans. The Republican, Democratic and Socialist Parties are all renegade to the basic American tradition of revolution.<sup>37</sup>

Americans have always been able to solve a basic crisis by revolutionary means. In 1776 we smashed the fetters of reactionary feudal rule by the European absentee landlord. In 1861 we smashed the feudal remnants of Negro slavery. With the same resolute and revolutionary determination we must, in 1933, turn to the task of smashing the oppressive and destructive rule of the Wall Street monopolist capitalists who have brought our country to the brink of destruction. "If that be treason, make the most of it!"<sup>38</sup>

But it was only after the Seventh World Congress that the appeal to the American workers in terms of this "American tradition" was given greater emphasis and more serious attention.

<sup>35</sup> Browder, *Why Communism?* pp. 115-117.

<sup>36</sup> Browder, *What Is Communism?* pp. 13-21; *The People's Front*, pp. 187-269.

<sup>37</sup> Browder, *Communism in the United States*, pp. 173-174.

<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 174.



Called upon to account for this important neglect, Earl Browder attributed it to the sectarianism of the early American Marxists. He alleged that it was "... foisted upon the radical movement some generations ago by the sectarian influences that dominated the Socialist Party."<sup>39</sup>

The new approach has been summed up in the slogan, "Communism is Twentieth Century Americanism."<sup>40</sup> It was, in short, an attempt to fuse Marxism-Leninism with Jeffersonism.<sup>41</sup>

*Tribute to Jefferson.* Earl Browder expressed his high regard for Thomas Jefferson as America's greatest exponent of democracy—a democracy which, the former alleged, has been perverted by industrial-finance capitalism and which must be restored to its original path by collective ownership. It is this path which Jefferson himself would have espoused were he alive today.

Our program for socialism is organically linked up with, is a necessary outgrowth from, the traditional American democracy as founded by Thomas Jefferson, whose political descendants we are. Let those who try to set off Jefferson against Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin, who see in socialism something "imported from abroad," as "alien," be reminded that, in the same sense, Jefferson was also "importing" the theories of democracy from Europe to America, where they found their first and best realization of that period. . . . We are following closely in Jefferson's footsteps, therefore, when we reject all narrow nationalism of thought and program, when we range the whole world to find the best from everywhere. Like Jefferson, we believe that America is entitled to the best of everything, whatever its point of origin.<sup>42</sup>

Jefferson was the greatest philosopher and statesman of American democracy in its formative period. . . . He was a firm believer in individual private property as the basis for democracy, because in his time this meant giving an economic basis to democracy in which the great majority of people owned their own instruments of production and there were few wage-workers. Therefore democracy must go forward, restore an economic base for itself, in the only possible way, by common democratic ownership of the great social instruments of production—a conclusion to which Jefferson would undoubtedly come if he were with us today, because he was essentially a reasonable man, not a dogmatist.<sup>43</sup>

We Communists claim the revolutionary traditions of Americanism. We are the only ones who consciously continue those traditions and apply them to the problems of today. *We are the Americans and Communism is the Americanism of the twentieth century.*<sup>44</sup>

*Declaration of Independence.* The Declaration of Independence has loomed large in the efforts of the Communist party to make the American

<sup>39</sup> *New Masses* (June 14, 1938), XXVII: 12, p. 10.

<sup>40</sup> Browder, *The People's Front*, pp. 141, 269. C.P., U.S.A., *Resolutions of the Ninth Convention of the Communist Party*, p. 35.

<sup>41</sup> Browder, *The Democratic Front*, p. 93.

<sup>42</sup> Browder, *The Democratic Front*, pp. 88–89. Cf. Browder, *Talks to America*, p. 20.

<sup>43</sup> Browder, *Daily Worker*, April 30, 1938, p. 9.

<sup>44</sup> Browder, *What Is Communism?* p. 19.

workers and farmers revolutionary conscious. Communists have intimated that they, in the main, have been its upholders in this day and age.

July 4, 1776, was the glorious affirmation of the belief in democracy, in the rule of the majority, in their right to determine their own destiny. There were many in Jefferson's day who feared this doctrine, and there are many today in America who prate its syllables but who connive secretly to undermine and nullify it.<sup>45</sup>

America was born as an independent nation out of a conflict that arose between the interests of the masses of the people on one side and the then existing government on the other side. The Declaration of Independence laid down the fundamental revolutionary principle that when such a conflict arises the people have the right and the duty to establish a new form of government to guarantee their future security. We Communists maintain the Declaration of Independence today. . . .<sup>46</sup>

*America's revolutionary heroes.* The Communist party has especially invoked the writings and highly praised the deeds of the following historical figures who have helped build and carry on "America's revolutionary tradition": Thomas Paine,<sup>47</sup> George Washington,<sup>48</sup> Patrick Henry,<sup>49</sup> Thomas Jefferson,<sup>50</sup> James Madison,<sup>51</sup> Andrew Jackson,<sup>52</sup> Abraham Lincoln.<sup>53</sup>

Several examples will indicate how these Americans have been held up as patterns which the Communist party has attempted to follow.

Around the birth of our country as an independent nation cluster such heroic names as those of Patrick Henry, whose famous shout, "As for me, give me liberty or give me death!" re-echoes down the corridors of time; of Thomas Paine, whose deathless contribution to our national life of a militant anti-clericalism has long survived the many pamphlets with which he fought, the form of which alone belongs to a past age; of Thomas Jefferson, whose favorite thought revolved about watering the tree of liberty with the blood of tyrants (he thought this "natural manure" should be applied to the tree about every twenty years!); of all the founding fathers, whose chief claim to glory lies in their "treason" to the "constitutional government" of their day and among whom the most opprobrious epithet was "loyalist."<sup>54</sup>

George Washington, commander-in-chief of the victorious revolutionary armies, was the popular symbol of national independence, and of the national unity accomplished by the new Constitution. . . . His role in the creation of an independent united nation was unquestionably of the first order. The honorary title of "Father of his Country" given him by history is solidly based on historic fact.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>45</sup> Howard, *This Is 4th of July*, p. 10.

<sup>46</sup> Browder, *The People's Front*, p. 197.

<sup>47</sup> Browder, *The People's Front*, pp. 235, 243–244, 250, 255; *What Is Communism?* pp. 15–16.

<sup>48</sup> Browder, *The People's Front*, pp. 235, 254, 287.

<sup>49</sup> Browder, *What Is Communism?* p. 15.

<sup>50</sup> Browder, *The People's Front*, pp. 193, 223, 255, 257, 288; *The Democratic Front*, pp. 89–92; *Traitors in American History*, pp. 12–13.

<sup>51</sup> Browder, *The People's Front*, p. 287.

<sup>52</sup> Browder, *The Democratic Front*, p. 93.

<sup>53</sup> Browder, *The People's Front*, pp. 187–196; *What Is Communism?* pp. 17–18.

<sup>54</sup> Browder, *What Is Communism?* p. 15–16.

<sup>55</sup> Browder, *The People's Front*, p. 254.



Lincoln carried the fight against reaction to the American masses. He roused them and mobilized them for an offensive in behalf of the struggle against tyranny, for liberty and democracy. In this cause, he called upon the traditions of 1776, as we Communists do today. . . .<sup>56</sup>

. . . we declare that we are continuing the great American tradition, we are carrying on the work of Jefferson, Paine, Jackson, and Lincoln. We express this fusion of the American tradition with socialism, when we sing "The Star Spangled Banner" and "The International" together, when we decorate our platform today with the flag of our democratic revolution of the eighteenth century and the red flag of the socialist revolution of the twentieth century. This is the meaning of our slogan: "Communism is Twentieth Century Americanism."<sup>57</sup>

#### TRADE-UNION UNITY<sup>58</sup>

The trade-union policies adopted by the Seventh World Congress constituted a drastic change from those formulated by the previous Congress. Based on the allegation that "objective conditions had changed," the policy of building dual, red unions, upheld by the Comintern in 1928, was abandoned. Instead, the keynote became *trade-union unity*.

We are definitely for the re-establishment of *trade union unity in each country and on an international scale. We are for one union in each industry.*

*We stand for one federation of trade unions in each country. We are for one international federation of trade unions organized according to industries.*

*We stand for one International of trade unions based on the class struggle. We are for united class trade unions as one of the major bulwarks of the working class against the offensive of capitalism and fascism. Our only condition for uniting the trade unions is: Struggle against capital, struggle against fascism, and internal trade union democracy.*

Time does not stand still. To us the question of trade union unity on a national as well as international scale is a question of the great task of uniting our class in mighty, single trade union organizations against the class enemy.<sup>59</sup>

*Abandonment of dual unionism.* Communists were instructed to liquidate all dual unions which they controlled and enter into the big trade-union movements, even if the latter were conservative and bureaucratically managed. Here they were urged to fight for the reinstatement of expelled members, for trade-union democracy, and for the adoption of militant, class struggle policies.<sup>60</sup>

In countries where there are small Red trade unions, efforts must be made to secure their admission into the big reformist trade unions, with demands put forward for the

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189.

<sup>57</sup> Browder, *The Democratic Front*, p. 93.

<sup>58</sup> See Browder, *New Steps in the United Front*, pp. 16-18; *The People's Front*, pp. 174-181. Dimitroff, *Working Class Unity—Bulwark Against Fascism*, pp. 43-48; *Resolutions—Seventh Congress of the Communist International*, pp. 31-32. Foster, *From Bryan to Stalin*, pp. 268-281.

<sup>59</sup> Dimitroff, *Working Class Unity—Bulwark Against Fascism*, p. 46.

<sup>60</sup> Dimitroff, *Resolutions—Seventh Congress of the Communist International*, p. 32.

right to defend their views and the reinstatement of expelled members. In countries where big Red and reformist trade unions exist side by side, efforts must be made to secure their amalgamation on an equal footing, on the basis of a platform of struggle against the offensive of capital and a guarantee of trade union democracy.

It is the duty of Communists to work actively in the reformist and united trade unions, to consolidate them and to recruit the unorganized workers for them, and at the same time exert every effort to have these organizations actually defend the interests of the workers and really become genuine class organizations. To this end the Communists must strive to secure the support of the entire membership, of the officials, and of the organizations as a whole.<sup>61</sup>

In the United States, the change in party line was anticipated. Early in 1935, the Central Committee of the Communist party declared that its main trade-union task was to build the A.F. of L. (and not a rival trade-union organization).

. . . We are now able to say very clearly and definitely that the main task of the Party in the sphere of trade union work must be the work in the A.F. of L., fighting on the basis of trade union democracy, for the independent leadership of these struggles in spite of the sabotage and treachery of the reformist bureaucrats.<sup>62</sup>

William Z. Foster has disclosed that the Trade Union Unity League, the organization of affiliated unions essentially communist dominated and controlled, began its efforts for trade-union unity in 1933.<sup>63</sup> By 1935, a merger of basic T.U.U.L. with A.F. of L. unions had been so successfully effected that the National Executive Board of the former recommended the formal dissolution of its organization, which was soon accomplished.<sup>64</sup>

*A.F. of L.-C.I.O. harmony and unity.* After the development of differences within the A.F. of L. between the forces of William Green and John L. Lewis, which resulted in the formation of the Committee for Industrial Organization (C.I.O.), the Communist party declared itself in sympathy with and for the support of the principle underlying the C.I.O.<sup>65</sup> Nevertheless it declared that it would oppose all efforts at splitting the American Federation of Labor, the unity of the labor movement in the United States being of paramount importance.<sup>66</sup>

Our Party has throughout the whole of this critical period in the trade union movement thrown its full weight in the fight to maintain the unity of the American Federation of Labor and against the splitting policies of the reactionary leaders of the Executive

<sup>61</sup> *Idem.*

<sup>62</sup> Browder, *Communism in the United States*, p. 208.

<sup>63</sup> Foster, *op. cit.*, p. 272.

<sup>64</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 274.

<sup>65</sup> Browder, *The People's Front*, p. 174.

<sup>66</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.



Council. . . . We shall redouble our efforts in the fight for trade union unity, for the unity of the American Federation of Labor. . . .<sup>67</sup>

. . . . We continue uncompromising opposition to all the splitting efforts of the American Federation of Labor Executive Council, whether of separate national unions, of locals, of city or state federations. Where splits, are carried through in spite of all, we continue to help to consolidate all expelled unions, and continue to fight for unity and for realizing the C.I.O. organizing program, striving to win the A.F. of L. locals to support and participation in that fight. We will never cease to demand the unification of the American trade union movement.<sup>68</sup>

(The sections on the Negro question, immediate demands, and the New Deal have been omitted in this abridgment.)

<sup>67</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 135-136.

<sup>68</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY\*

### THE COMMUNIST PARTY, U.S.A.

The following are among the more important newspapers, periodicals, books, and pamphlets pertaining to the Communist party:

*Daily Worker*—Daily newspaper, including Sunday.

*The Communist*—Monthly theoretical organ.

*Communist International*—International monthly theoretical organ.

*New Masses*—Unofficial literary weekly.

Browder, Earl. *Communism in the United States*. W.L.P. 1936.

——— *What Is Communism?* New York: Vanguard Press. 1936.

C.P., U.S.A. *Constitution and By-Laws of the Communist Party*. W.L.P. 1938.

Dimitroff, Georgi. *Resolutions of the Seventh Congress of the Communist International*.

W.L.P. 1935.

E.C.C.I. *Program of the Communist International*. W.L.P. 1936.

Foster, William Z. *From Bryan to Stalin*. I.P. 1936.

——— *Toward Soviet America*. I.P. 1932.

Manuilsky, D. Z. *Revolutionary Crisis, Fascism and War*. W.L.P. 1934.

——— *Work of the Seventh World Congress*. W.L.P. 1936.

Olgin, Moissaye J. *Why Communism?* (second revised edition). W.L.P. 1935.

Piatnitsky, O. *Twenty-One Conditions of Admission into the Communist International*.

W.L.P. 1934.

Stalin, Joseph. *Leninism* (two volumes). I.P. 1933.

——— *Foundations of Leninism*. I.P. 1932.

——— *October Revolution*. I.P. 1934.

\* Publishers' abbreviations used: International Publishers, New York: I.P. Workers Library Publishers, New York: W.L.P.